Path of the Kherete

Kherete Foundations: Introduction

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Forward

The Purpose of Our Project

Since the publication of the *Psychic Vampire Codex*, many of you have contacted me seeking to become involved in my group, House Kheperu. I write extensively about House Kheperu and its teachings in the Codex -- the document remains one of the main tools used for teaching our techniques of energy work even within the House. However, in sharing House Kheperu's particular point of view with the greater vampire community, it was not my intention to seduce the whole community to the ways of House Kheperu. I felt that we Kheprians had some ideas that others could learn from, but we were not prepared for so many to identify so very deeply with the teachings of the House.

So now we introduce The Path of the Kherete:

Over the years since the book's release, I am certain that most of you have noticed how very reluctant we are to give someone the title of "Kheprian." Originally, this term was used for anyone who had direct ties to us from the past -- people who shared a specific style of alteration to their energy. However, even before the Codex was picked up by Weiser Books, the House as a whole had decided to restrict the use of the term. We had seen too many instances of unstable individuals identifying with a system -- any system -- and then acting in such a way that brought the negative attention of the media to that system, making the group look bad because of the poor choices of one individual who was not even properly a part of the group to begin with.

We agreed, as a House, that the last thing we needed was to have some troubled teen go shoot up a school and declare that he was Kheprian. And so we have taken care to control the circumstances that allow a person to use that descriptor for themselves. It has cost us. We have had to scold people who very probably had legitimate ties to us, asking them not to use the term until they had gone through a long and tedious process of verification. We have shot down very sincere requests to start sister households, sometimes making people feel unwanted, shut out, and judged.

At this point, we understand and accept that many of you feel a strong resonance with our teachings. Just as many of you do not, and that is just fine, as well. But for those of you who have long sought some verification, some nod of approval and connection, we have reached a solution. At a meeting this past February, I was able to get the members of House Kheperu to endorse a word.

While, for legal reasons, we will continue to reserve the term "Kheprian" as a descriptor only of oathed members of House Kheperu, we can no longer ignore those brothers and sisters who feel a strong tie to us. And so, we offer the term **Kherete** (pronounced kheh-REET). This is a new word with no previous connotations attached to it that nevertheless captures some of the essence of "Kheperu" by maintaining the same first syllable. A Kherete is anyone -- vampire or otherwise -- who follows the teachings of House Kheperu, in part or in whole. A Kherete does not have to have an alteration. A Kherete does not have to be a psychic vampire. Sanguines who practice responsibly are accepted, just as anyone else who feels a strong tie to this system will be accepted.

At this time, two Kheretian households are already in the process of being formed. We know that more will follow. We will impose no formal laws or structure upon you; we simply ask that you keep the Code of the Black Veil as it appears published in the Psychic Vampire Codex. You will be independent of House Kheperu, allowed to organize yourselves however you see fit. For our part, we will help you when we can. Some of the teaching materials that have previously only been used within House Kheperu will be released to you. We will release a ritual book for those who wish to integrate this into their spiritual practice. And several members of House Kheperu have volunteered to act as liaisons, giving advice on the various topics raised in the Codex and other works.

I do not care if you use this word or not. I am in no way attempting to homogenize the vampire community. You do not have to follow this path to be who you are. But the word is there for those who wish to make use of part of all of the Kheprian teachings without directly being involved in House Kheperu. Essentially, we are giving open sanction to sister households under the banner of the Kherete. We hope this provides a workable solution for all who have been seeking and have felt this need.

--Michelle Belanger

The Path of the Kherete

What the Kherete Are

The Path of the Kherete advocates an ethical approach to energy work, vampirism, and a commitment to the pursuit of wisdom in all its forms. Valued in particular are personal responsibility & growth, as well as tolerance and respect towards other people and their individual paths.

Those who walk the Path of the Kherete:

- Follow the Black Veil v2.0, as published in *The Psychic Vampire Codex*, or at least the basic ideas and tenets.
- Subscribe to the Kherete creed, promoting change and growth of the Self.

Material produced in the Path of the Kherete resources is inspired primarily by the teachings and practices of House Kheperu, in an effort to make the material available to a wider audience. Influences from other sources may be added which focus primarily on understanding and working with energy and subtle reality. While we do subscribe to certain understandings of energy, there is not a specific theocracy enforced. Our material is designed to be "plug-n-play;" in essence able to be used in a variety of spiritualities, traditions, and disciplines, compromising none.

While by no means a hard-and-fast rule for all who identify as Kherete, the following Creed of the Kherete fairly closely sums up what many believe.

Now and forever, I dedicate myself to change.
In myself and the world:
I will sunder the barriers that lead to stagnation.
I will let go of things that have outlived their use.
I will live as a catalyst, allowing change to flow in me, through me.
And I will embrace this path in heart, mind, and soul.

What the Kherete Are Not

The Kherete are not satellite groups of House Kheperu, or smaller chapters. House Kheperu is not going to be certifying Kherete individuals or groups, nor will it be monitoring the progress and practices of the individual Houses. Because it is not logistical to actually watch over each group to assure that our word means what we want it to, we are not going to try to legitimize anyone. This is a rather open approach to the whole project.

The Path of the Kherete is also not specifically only for vampires, or only for psychic vampires. The material is open for all those who identify with the path and can adhere to the guidelines set forth.

What is the Kherete Project

In addition to the new term, House Kheperu is working with a group of dedicated individuals to construct an actual curriculum of study and training that interested parties can pick up as they see fit. The material released does not go in a particularly sequential order, nor is training required in order to adopt the label of Kherete. The first book in the series is the only one we would designate as "required reading." Future books are planned on topics that may or may not be of interest, so anything following the introductory text can be read through in any order desired. The Kherete Program has appealed to individuals of multiple levels of experience, so the subject matter covered moves from beginning in some areas to advanced, covering a range of topics on magic, energy work, and the subtle body. As well as the book releases, the Kherete administration at this time maintains a community of discussion forums and all other related aspects of the program on its website, at *Kherete.org*.

Before You Begin

It is impossible to determine, before having met any one reader, what the prior skill level or experience of our audience will be. Therefore, we must work with some assumptions what pre-requisites readers might have. This is the introductory book for the Path of the Kherete. If you have no other experience in ritual, magic, or energy work, you should be able to follow most of the concepts and exercises in this book. Future books will be released for more intermediate to advanced practitioners. However, we do presume, if you are reading this book, that you have read *The Psychic Vampire Codex*, by Michelle Belanger. If you have not read the PVC, it is strongly recommended that you acquire a copy, as we will be referencing certain sections in this work. If circumstances in your life do not permit you to have a copy of the PVC, you may be able to get most of the pertinent information from the early version of the PVC which can be found for free online at Sacred-Texts.org, listed as *The Vampire Codex*.

Throughout the book, we will also be suggesting resources for those who are interested in any of the sections and wish to conduct further reading. Some books or websites may also be recommended if individuals are having difficulty with certain exercises or concepts, covering material in a different or more basic fashion.

No special tools are required for the exercises given in this book. We do recommend having some sort of journal or notebook on hand before attempting any of the exercises. A journal does not have to be exclusively used for recording energetic experiences - it is perfectly fine to have a journal and a diary share the same book – but it should include your various magical experiences. This is particularly important any time you have impressions of any sort. For example, if you do an energy body reading, all of your observations should be written down. If you have a past-life memory, it should be written down. If you have a vision/make a prediction, it should be written down.

This is not to say you should not also write down and record the results of other workings – you should. But workings that involve getting information in some fashion are especially important. This is because these impressions are often confirmable later, and because they are some of the most prone to being mis-remembered. They also make some of the most satisfying confirmation.

Considerations

The material covered within this program is firmly well-ensconced in the realm of the subtle or immaterial. As such, it is largely unexplored territory. Although humans have been fascinated by the unknown for millennia, and have been actively investigating such things for hundreds of years, there have been little to no common results reached. While we cannot give you a map, before we get into the real "meat" of the book, accept the following considerations as components of a survival kit, as it were. These are important concepts we would ask you to keep in mind as you begin your journey.

Sanity and Magic

We all strive to be open-minded about one another's beliefs and experiences. This is essential to our community, because we have had to have an open mind about our own beliefs and experiences in order to accept them as real and valid. Much of what we believe—in fact, what forms the foundation of our community's identity--are claims of supernatural or psychic experiences that mainstream society would seek to debunk. Our materialist, scientific culture has no room for a sixth sense, let alone a seventh or an eighth, and the empirical rule of science leads most materialists to assert that if you cannot touch it, it is not there.

So many of the perceptions and sensations that form a vital part of our experiences are subtle and numinous in nature; they cannot be proven in a laboratory. Often, it is very hard for us to "prove" them to ourselves. We simply have to accept that we are not crazy, that these impressions are valid, and that the materialist approach to reality somehow fails to account for a large portion of human experience.

Yet this creates a certain amount of credulousness within the community. Since we each have had experiences that the rest of the world would reject as lies or delusion, we are much more likely to listen with a sympathetic ear to someone else's experiences, no matter how strange they may sound. We are painfully aware of how hard to believe many of our own experiences and beliefs are, especially because we have had to struggle to believe them in the face of a culture that tells us these beliefs **must** be the product of a crazed mind.

Obviously, we do not want to disbelieve another's claims especially because we want to be believed ourselves. However, this can lead us into a dangerous habit of accepting everything that is told to us by others without question, and the sad fact of reality is not everyone who makes an extraordinary claim is telling you the truth. There are quite a number of people who lie and make up tales about their beliefs and experiences. They do this as an attention-getting measure, to make themselves feel powerful and important, or to get you to follow them and accept further stories and orders without question. These are the poseurs and cult-daddies of the scene, and they hurt our communities not only by preying upon the innocent and vulnerable, but also by giving the outside world a very negative impression of us.

So how do we know when our tolerance has crossed into the realm of gullibility? Whenever someone makes a claim to you of a supernatural belief or experience, listen carefully to what they have to say. See if what they say makes sense based on your own experiences. Even magick functions on certain laws, and although we may not understand all of these laws as of yet, they still seem to hold true in most cases. If what this person has to say is radically different from your own experiences and what you have learned of the magickal world, then that should set off warning bells in your head. You should not discount their claims just yet -- it may simply be that your own experiences are limited and this person is discussing a principle that you have not encountered yet. It is also possible that some of the beliefs and conclusions you

have drawn from your own experiences are either wholly or partially wrong. We make as a great a mistake assuming that everything we believe is 100% accurate as when we believe that everything other people tell us is 100% accurate.

After analyzing what the person has to say, analyze the person zirself. How does zie act? How does zie dress? Does zie speak like someone who is reasonably intelligent and well-educated? These might sound like judgments based on superficial things, but the fact of the matter is that mentally unbalanced individuals often demonstrate their problems in their mannerisms, diction, and dress. Not everyone who has a nervous tic is insane, just as not everyone who refuses to look you in the eye is lying to you, but these are good cues to keep in mind when trying to judge someone's credibility. There are quite a lot of people who our mainstream culture would label depressed or bipolar or delusional who have had very legitimate experiences and who have a lot of insightful and worthwhile things to say. However, you must keep in mind that people with chemical imbalances and unstable personalities cannot always determine the line between reality and imagination, and any of their stories should be especially scrutinized for this reason.

After analyzing the person, analyze the situation in which you are receiving this information. What could the person's motivation for speaking with you be? What kind of level of trust has been built up between you? Chances are, the voodoo queen of Wheeling would not come right out and say who zie is and what kind of army of zombies zie commands to every Tom, Dick, and Harry on the street. Common sense dictates that zie would have to trust you quite a bit to reveal information as sensitive as that, and if you just met someone at a coffee house who makes similarly wild and powerful claims, chances are, they're telling you a tall tale.

If it is pretty clear that the person making the claim has something to gain from you, be very leery of it. Yet also keep an open mind on what you consider "gain" to be. Not everyone who's trying to "sell" you something is out for your money. A lot of people are simply motivated by a need to be believed, or validated, or they want to get you on their "side" for some imagined conflict. If you thought you left the petty social politics and cliquishness behind in high school, you're in for a surprise, because those silly social games keep a lot of people occupied well into their 70s.

Sex is another basic motivator, and if you're a pretty young girl (or even a pretty young boy), really keep your eyes open when people start coming up to you and trying to tell you how the universe works. All too often, they'll wind up trying to teach you Tantric sex magick or something similar -- the long and the short of it is they want you in their bed.

With all these things to watch out for, how can you ever find a teacher or mentor that you can trust? The best approach is education. There are a lot more books out there than used to be the case, and with the Internet, a great deal of material is at your very fingertips. Not everything in a book or on a web page is truthful or accurate -- just about everyone is trying to sell you something in this day and age. However, if you approach all information cautiously, analyze it carefully in respect to your own experiences, and try to judge the motivations of the writer, you'll find a lot to teach yourself.

Material that you read in a book or on a webpage is a little safer than having someone come up to you and spout off all his vast occult knowledge. For one thing, you can read at your leisure, and if there are claims or references in the work that set off alarm bells for you, you have the additional luxury of being able to research those claims and see what other authorities have to say about them. Also, although part of a writer's job is to present a convincing argument so you agree with his points, still read material is not nearly as

dynamic nor as potentially overwhelming as spoken conversation delivered by a real pro at the debating game. So when you're just starting out and you're not sure what to believe or who to believe it from, read, read, read! It will give you a great background for later when you are comfortable enough and self-assured enough to tackle face-to-face conversations with people who may be trying to take advantage of you.

For face-to-face conversations and study, always try to stick with informal study groups where everyone has an equal say. You'll find that some persons within the group can be considered authorities on certain topics, but as long as they're not always trying to dictate what others will accept and believe, then they're the kinds of authorities that will only help you expand your own knowledge. Steer clear of groups or individuals who are "gathering members for a light and darkness war" or who are engaged in "battles on the astral plane" or other such nonsense. These psychic war dialogues are just a very common and dramatic way to pull people into the group, incite them with a purpose, and let them run around as pawns for one or more cultish-type leaders.

Also, if someone comes up to you and claims to have information for you because they've known you in a past life, try to make certain that you get impressions that reinforce what this individual is saying. That's another dialogue that I've seen misused in groups in the past, and unfortunately many a poor innocent has had zir head screwed on backwards with tall tales of a long ago life in a magickal time that's nothing more than a tale someone was spinning to gain zir affection.

There is nothing wrong with listening to what people have to say. In fact, I encourage everyone to keep an open mind, because we can never be 100% certain that our own beliefs are entirely accurate or well-founded. Even if a person you talk with has beliefs you utterly disagree with, still you have learned something in the very act of ordering your thoughts for conversation and comparing your beliefs against their own.

Do not, however, believe everything that is told you. You should not go around being paranoid of everyone who comes up to you and wants to chat about spiritual things, but you should let wisdom and common sense guide you. Always analyze what the person is saying to you, analyze the person zirself, and analyze the situation and what may be gained from getting you to believe the story. If any of these things set alarm bells off for you, then take what is said with a grain of salt. Feel free to challenge someone's beliefs that you disagree with -- sometimes there's nothing better than a heated debate on theology. If zie is unwilling to debate or defend the beliefs to you, or to back up the claims with real incidents or examples, you can probably spend your time better with someone else.

Clear Distinction of the Real and Unreal

The Taoists have an exercise geared toward honing your subtle perceptions. They recognize that, especially in the early stages of awareness, it is very difficult to separate a true perception from imagination.

The exercise is called "Clear Perception of the Real and Unreal" and it hinges upon the ability to turn the perceptions inward to "see" the inner workings of the body.

Excercise: Clear Perception of the Real and Unreal

The exercise starts like most Taoist exercises: with a state of deep meditation. Once the meditative state has been achieved, focus your vision inward. Pay absolute attention to your body. First, focus on the energy as it passes through the many channels and centers in your body. From the meditative state, it should be easiest to perceive the energy first.

Pay attention to each and every detail that you "see". Try to follow the energy as it moves throughout your system, mapping

out the various channels, where they cross and interconnect, and how they relate to the chakras or energy centers that are essentially the organs of the energy body.

Examine each chakra in detail. Do not just think "this is where this chakra should be" -- experience what is there inside of you. It may not be what's in a book. Chances are, in fact, that it will not be, as every person's body is slightly different, and there is variation regardless of the overall similarity.

From the energy, focus on the internal organs. Actually try to see your heart, both inside and out. See your lungs, your liver. In your mind, explore the shape of these, the color. Make note of any weaknesses or dark spots. It is best if you actually have no familiarity with anatomy when you do this, because that might bias your visualization -- and it is easy to use your imagination to fill in the blanks when you cannot quite perceive as clearly as you would like.

From your organs, move on to your bones. Count how many ribs you have. Look inside your head and try to count the bones in your skull. See how the joints connect. Pay careful attention to every little detail.

When you have explored yourself with this inner vision to your satisfaction, take some time to come down from the meditative state. Then record your impressions. Try to draw or at least describe what each organ looked like. Write down how many ribs you counted, or how many bones you saw making up your skull.

Finally, go out and get an anatomy book (the library should have one). Compare your impressions to what this book says. How accurate were your perceptions? How much of the exercise do you think was your imagination trying to fill in the blanks for you? Can you tell where your clear perceptions left off and your imagination started?

If you can find the line of demarcation between clear distinction and imaginary perception, you will be doing splendidly. But this will take time.

Try not to study the anatomy book too closely. Then try the exercise again, a few weeks later. Keep in mind the way it "felt" when you were filling in the blanks with your imagination. Try to trust your true vision and let go of this need to imagine what you could be, instead of actually are, perceiving.

UPG

UPG is a term which originated in the reconstructionist portion of the Pagan community to denote a mystical or spiritual experience without direct support in that tradition's lore. *UPG* stands for either *"Unsubstantiated Personal Gnosis"* or *"Unverified Personal Gnosis"*. For example, if someone offered red beer to the Egyptian goddess Sekhmet and experienced that it pleased Her, that would be corroborated by the Egyptian lore. If someone offered Sekhmet dark chocolate and experienced that it pleased Her, that would be UPG, because chocolate isn't in Egyptian lore. Other acronyms in the *PG family include but are not limited to:

PCPG (*Peer Corroborated Personal Gnosis*): When *UPG* is shared with others who experience the same or similar results.

RCPG (*Reality-Confirmed Personal Gnosis)*. When UPG, like a premonition, comes true.

These terms are also sometimes referred to as *VPG* (*Verified Personal Gnosis*) or *CPG* (*Corroborated Personal Gnosis*).

This principle is useful in denoting that personal belief is derived from experience that cannot necessarily be proven but is, nonetheless, real and true for the person who underwent the experience. Stating that something is UPG or derived from UPG is a way of saying, "Now, take this with a grain of salt because it is not directly corroborated by the lore/science/mainstream metaphysics, but in my experience, this is how it is."

UPG is a valuable and necessary part of any personal practice, whether spiritual,

religious, or energetic, but should always be subjected to rigorous scrutiny and the application of logic, lest it lose its value and become a hindrance. It should supplement lore and science, not *supplant* it.

Autognosis

Autognosis is the process of understanding oneself. How one thinks, reacts, and perceives the world. Having clear self-understanding aids in more clearly understanding the boundaries between one's own internal mental and emotional terrain and subtle perceptions that go into magical or energy work.

Learning Styles

Not everyone interacts and learns in the same way. This is particularly true for kinesthetic/tactile learners, who learn through doing, moving or touching, attempting to learn energy work from commonly available materials, which is predominately visual or auditory in nature. Often material targeted to one style of learner will make little to no sense to people who primarily engage in one of the other two learning styles. Talking about aura colors visual energy fields might lead to confusion or disheartenment to a tactile learner, who might be better at feeling energy fields, or the auditory learner, who might get more of a hearing sensation.

Guided pathworkings and meditations can also be dramatically affected by one's learning style. For example, if one primarily senses things in a tactile fashion (by touch), zie may have difficulty with a visual meditation. If one is aware of this fact, pathworkings can be adapted to engage more of the senses one is most comfortable using. Instead of "seeing" a forest path, perhaps one might "feel" the texture or temperature, creating a more real experience.

Having a clear understanding of personal learning style can help a person work though material directed toward other learning styles, as well as aid in subtle energy and memory work. There are many tests available to pinpoint one's learning style. It is often a good idea to take such assessments a couple times get rid of the possibly a "off day" throwing off results.

Multiple Intelligences

Multiple intelligences is a theory put forth by Howard Gardner. Gardner proposed that the traditional notion of intelligence was far too limited, and did not represent the full range of human potential. In Gardner's theory, there are eight areas of intelligence: bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, naturalistic, intrapersonal, visual-spatial, musical

Just as with learning styles, there are several methods for assessing one's intelligence area. *LdPride.net* has introductory articles on both learning styles and multiple intelligences.

Personality Tests

Personality tests attempt to assess long term, stable aspects of a person's personality. They help assess patterns in behavior, thoughts and feelings. Often they give a general overview of major characteristics that can aid and providing a general framework in self-understanding. Two common personality tests are the Enneagram personality system and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

Knowing Oneself

Beyond the testing for learning styles, intelligence and personality, practices like meditation, journaling and talk therapy are all tools that can contribute to helping understand the self. Even simply taking long, solo walks or engaging in activities that free the mind up for self-reflection can be used. The key is to find something that works for you and stick with it.

Why is it important? The search for self and use of subtle senses is by no means an exact science; there is much up to interpretation or subject to changed. The mental landscape is very fluid and easy to change.

While we may believe memories are solid, studies have shown the mind can reconstruct memories or subtle impressions to fit a suggestion or model. There is also a phenomenon known as *cryptomnesia*, where you read something, forget you read it, and then remember it later but think you came up with it all on your own. This sort of thing skews results and conclusions dramatically, which is why we so highly recommend writing things down indelibly before sharing with someone else. If you do not have a good sense of yourself, your identity, your boundaries, it can be very easy to get swept up in a group and led to places or conclusions that are not comfortable or just plain wrong. Remember, YOU are the only expert on yourself; while others can give suggestions, it is solely your responsibility to decide what is true and what is not. Anyone else who claims to be an expert on you is dangerous or deluded.

Discretion & Exposure

In magical traditions and practices, silence is prized and regarded as a necessary element. The distinction between knowing when to speak and when to remain silent is a skill that anyone, magician or non-magician, should learn to develop. From a magical perspective, it is to keep the energies of a working intact and undistracted, but we also maintain a certain amount of discretion about beliefs and practices, attitudes and preferences, especially when we are not certain they will be received positively. In the same way you do not reveal your bedroom activities to your co-workers, at least until you know them well, it is also ill-advised to reveal religious beliefs or theories of the fringe or unproven variety. This is not to say one can never share with someone not currently in the same subcultures or religions, merely that one must be careful and reveal things only in their proper time to who might be able to consider them: proper time, proper place, proper mood.

Additionally, before "coming out" one should examine precisely why there is a need to expose this part to those around. What are you trying to gain? Or, perhaps, what **could** possibly be gained? Why do you need to talk about it with people who do not have a framework to understand it by? There is a wide assortment of communities both on and offline where one can share ideas and seek help amongst people who generally do not have to be convinced first. While outright deception is not advocated, it is possible to have healthy relationships to a variety of degrees wherein partners do not have full disclosure.

What is the problem with being out? It is not like I am harming anyone by what I do, nor does it affect how I do my job or conduct relations, so knowing that should not change their opinions of me, right? It would be lovely if that were the case, but the fact remains that we are still judged by our family, friends, co-workers, and strangers for what we do or how we think behind closed doors. While we do not advocate living a life of fear and paranoia, it is wise to be aware of the risks that could be involved should you be exposed. One may lose friends or family, or even lovers and relationships. While it is illegal in most areas to discriminate in the workplace, there are ways of making someone feel unwelcome to the point where zie does not feel comfortable working there. Parents can also have their parenting skills called into question by overly-concerned relatives and teachers. This will not happen in every situation; it is imperative that each person evaluates zir own individual situation critically, to see where the risks may lie. Some career fields are more at risk than others (those in the public eye, those involved with children, those in conservative fields), as well as some families and friends.

If one has decided disclosure is necessary and the risk is not too great, then the best way to approach such things is to begin with what your audience already knows or with which it is familiar, and to focus more on what facts or identifiable evidence you may have, not theories or speculation.

Energy Work

When discussing concepts like life energy and vitality from the Western perspective, we often find ourselves at a loss. Not only do Westerners typically lack an understanding of the general concepts, the English language notably lacks the proper vocabulary: there is no clear linguistic differentiation between the many different types of energy, from the energy that powers your television to the energy that fuels life. Energy is energy, right? So it shouldn't matter whether there are different terms to complicate matters. If that were the case, and the concept as interchangeable as the words, a Reiki Master would never need to pay an electric bill again. Since we do lack this terminology, English speakers often borrow terms from other cultures that have more experience with these notions, words like prana, qi, chi, ki, as well as others. The terms rarely are completely interchangeable, but the basic idea is conveyed. Energy as discussed in this document generally has to do with life energy, or vitality. It is invisible, governed by the will, and comes from a variety of places.

Healthy Dose of Caution

Thanks to techniques such as Reiki and Qi Gong, quite a number of people are now familiar with the concept of vital energy and how it can be harnessed to heal people. But many energy workers overlook the fact that energy can be a dangerous force as well, and like any form of energy it must be handled with care and discretion.

Energy manipulation is a relatively new technology here in the West. By Western standards, it is not even a technology at all, but something that falls more into the realm of pseudoscience. But past cultures, particularly those of China, India, and Tibet, have taken energy work very seriously and have devoted hundreds, if not thousands, of years to its study and perfection as a technology of the soul.

To most psychic vampires and some other naturally gifted individuals, energy work comes as second nature. But most of us only understand how to harness and manipulate energy on an instinctual level. That there are rules to how energy works, not to mention risks and dangers to using it improperly, rarely crosses our minds. We feel. We do. And we do not question the process as much as maybe we should.

Since energy manipulation carries definite risks, it is prudent to discuss those considerations early on. Certainly this is not to say that energy work is so dangerous that it should be avoided at all costs. Energy work is at the core of who we are. However, we should realize that some care and some caution is advised for working with energy for any intense or extended period of time.

Nerve Burn

Nerve burn seems to be an effect that prolonged and unusually intense exposure to energy has on the nerves and energy pathways. In most systems that acknowledge vital energy and have devoted some study to its understanding, the nerves are thought to either run parallel to the natural internal channels along which the energy courses or they are themselves concurrent with those channels. Over-using those channels is just like overusing any other part of the body. Too much energy over too prolonged a time will result in pain and tingling, until the channels are allowed to rest and recover.

We cannot deny that vital energy, which is subtle and almost physically intangible, has a decidedly tangible impact upon the physical body. If this were not the case, we would not be harnessing this energy in order to affect a healing on another person. When healing, or doing other energy work, we channel that energy through our own bodies into the body of another in order to affect a physical change through a subtle act. If we assume that our subtle manipulations can have a

physical affect on another person's body, we absolutely have to accept the fact that this inevitably will have a physical impact upon our own bodies as well. For this reason, we have to be careful.

The sensation of nerve burn is similar to having pinched a nerve, but it comes only after working with energy. There is a painful tingling in the fingers and hand, and sometimes this extends all the way up to the elbow. A lack of coordination in the fingers can result, as can slight to severe trembling. Additionally, there can be streaks of pain that run down the wrist and arm, usually following the major energy channels. The muscles of that limb can also feel exhausted and trembling, and this will strongly resemble the kind of muscular exhaustion that results from an electrolyte imbalance after prolonged exercise.

One becomes nerve burned after shunting too much energy through a particular part of the body, (generally the hands and arms, as these are the most common focus for any kind of energy manipulation or healing work). Basically, it is like running too much current through a wire. The wire can be damaged, if it does not burn out entirely. Fortunately for us, our "wires" can burn out, but they usually naturally repair themselves over time. Nerve burn can also occur from generally placing demands on your energetic system that are higher than it can maintain, which will also heal itself given time to rest, like a strained muscle.

The energy channels have to be seen as equivalent to any other part of the body. Pushing them beyond the limits of what they can safely handle will result in fatigue and pain. Like muscles, it is very possible that they can be pushed to a point where actual damage can occur, and this may take weeks or even months to heal. It is entirely feasible that pushing them well beyond their limits, especially successively over a number of times, will result in permanent and irreparable damage.

Long Term Effects

We can seek medical attention for a pulled muscle or a broken bone. If we have a little medical knowledge ourselves, we can even treat the pulled muscle on our own. However, a Western doctor is generally going to have no idea how to treat damage to the energy channels. Because these channels do not even exist in his worldview, zie is very likely to misdiagnose the problem and subject you to a wide number of expensive and futile tests while trying to figure it out. Few energy workers here in the West really understand the physiology of these channels, and so these are also not qualified to really diagnose or treat damage to these areas. Even we ourselves are just starting to understand what a complex and finely tuned system we have which allows us to harness and manipulate energy to a specific purpose. For these reasons, we should take extra care to not damage these channels in ourselves, as there is no guarantee that we are going to know how severe the damage really is or how it should best be treated.

There are long-term hazards to shunting too much energy through the hands and body. Consistently damaging the system can result in severe and long-term problems that manifest physically. Psychic vampires who never get their energy under control can often continue to exist in a very imbalanced state; the energy that courses through them has ravaged their nerves. In one observed case, a 32-year-old man had hands that shook constantly, as if he suffered from palsy. When asked, he said there was no identifiable medical reason for the trembling. Looking on the subtle level, one could see that the energy channels were all but burnt out in zir. They had been put under too much stress time and again because he never understood what he was doing with them but still instinctively used them.

On a larger scale, energy affects a great many aspects of our bodies, although the

rhythm of the heart seems to be the most significant one. Sudden and drastic changes in someone's energy level can adversely affect his heartbeat. Blood pressure also may be affected, and in some cases dangerously low energy can also result in markedly low blood pressure and triggering of pre-existing heart conditions.

Safe Handling

As with any exercise that could potentially overtax a muscle, the best approach to handling energy is to know your limits. In order to build strength and endurance in the muscular system, one must engage in regular exercise. This holds true for the energetic system as well. You cannot run out to a gym and expect to bench press 200 pounds the very first time you are there. You also cannot start working with energy and expect to be able to affect a massive healing with no previous preparation. You have to work up to it, and to try to force yourself to such a level immediately is idiocy, plain and simple. You are asking for all the pain and suffering that you get. Not only are you putting yourself at risk, but if you have not learned the control or technique necessary, you may damage anyone on whom you work.

There is a delicate balance that must be struck here. Working with energy for prolonged periods of time can cause nerve burn, but if you are going to build up your strength and endurance for it, if you are going to increase your capacity, you must work with energy regularly. This is not a once a month thing, but more like a twice or three-times a week thing, just like exercise. Set time aside in your schedule, start in ten-minute increments maybe three times a week, and stick to that regimen. Some excellent beginner exercises could be working on a daily shield and a regular chakra sensing and cleaning. Once you are able to feel the energy moving, it can make it that much easier to manipulate. This might exhaust you, but as you keep at it, you will build your endurance. When working with it that long and that frequently is no longer an effort, lengthen your exercise sessions to fifteen minutes at a time. Work up to thirty minutes, at least three times a week. Over time, you will probably be able to do more, but anything over an hour at a time is not recommended, and at least space this out for every other day. You do not need to be an energy Hercules, after all.

At all times, pay attention to what it feels like to work with the energy. Try to get a sense of your energy channels, and try to get a sense of how much energy you shunt through your system at a time naturally. Over time, learn how to gauge different levels of intensity, because there are radically different levels of intensity when it comes to energy. Quantity is not exactly the same as quality, and you may find that only a small, but very intense, amount will exhaust you in a few minutes, even when you are used to working with a middling quality of energy for an hour at a time.

Just as with your physical body, pay attention when things start to hurt. Pain means there is something wrong; it is that simple. If you do something with the energy, and marked pain results, particularly if you get symptoms that compare with nerve burn described above, stop. Give yourself a rest. Try not to shunt energy through that part of your body at all. Give it a day or two, and then try just a little bit in order to see if the pain persists. If there is still a level of discomfort, or if you find that you have difficulty focusing energy through that part of your body at all, you have probably done more than just superficial damage.

You might want to go to another energy worker in order to see if they can do something about this. The trick here, however, is that an energy worker is going to heal the area in the best way that zie knows how: by channeling energy in there. This might just do as much harm as good, since moving energy through there is what caused the problem in the first place. As observed above, very few people really understand the finer points of

our energetic physiology, and we are going to have to learn as we go.

Do not let any of this prevent you from working with energy. Just let it serve as a cautionary tale so that when you do work with energy, you do so carefully and with an attention to your own well-being. The main and best application of energy work is toward healing, but this does little good if we recklessly hurt ourselves in the process of healing another.

Basic Energy Perception

The quest to develop subtle sensitivity is generally one shared by all vampires. Since energy is not, on its own, perceptible to the naked senses, it is not generally noticed to those not paying attention. And yet, almost paradoxically, when we discuss the "sixth sense" or "extra-sensory perception", most report feelings closely tied to the five physical senses: people "see" auras or "hear" spirits speaking to them. Extrapolating from this, one early way to begin developing extra-sensory perception is to focus on developing sensory perception. Spend some time with your five senses; learn to identify the minutest changes. Most people cannot tell when the ambient temperature of a room changes if the change is less than five degrees, nor hear someone walking behind them. As you focus more and more on development of the physical five, you will likely begin to notice more things that you cannot attribute a direct mundane cause to.

Anyone has the capability to develop a certain amount of subtle perception, but it is not a level of sensitivity we commonly use, so it takes practice. Some people are innately born with more highly developed subtle senses. Would it not make sense those people are the ones who have a higher need to use such things, like vampires? Yet many vampires and other energetically or magically inclined people who take up the practice in their teens or later, seem to struggle for months or years, believing they have all of the subtle sensitivity of a brick, cursing the fates that failed to give them the tools they desired. In these cases, it tends to be that the individual already possesses such gifts, and did at a fairly young age. Over time, such gifts were either repressed and need to be re-tapped, or the feedback from those gifts is so "normal" to the individual that the case is not developing those gifts, but learning to recognize the feedback.

As for the sensing itself, there are many different modalities of sensing. Some people will never be able to actually see an aura, but they probably have a different way of perceiving subtle energy, such as a certain feeling they perceive on their skin when walking through different energy fields, different sounds, or even different smells. Most people have one sense that is stronger than the rest, but it is generally possible to develop the relative strength of the others. How? Practice. One recommended way of strengthening a different sense of perception is to immerse yourself in an experience where your primary sense is definitely picking up something. When you are certain you are perceiving something, try to associate a different sense with it. Ask yourself "If this were a sound, what would it sound like?" Do so for all of the senses you wish to develop. With practice, you should eventually be able to perceive in whichever sense works best for the occasion, or a variety of senses to confirm input.

Learning Your Own Perceptions

Most of the impressions you will get through various forms of energy reading will be highly symbolic. You will see colors, feel shapes and textures, and possibly envision complete images in your mind's eye. Despite the number of various popular associations (black meaning ill health or receptivity, purple meaning spirituality, etc.) the symbol set for each person is highly individual and learning

how to interpret it is one of the ongoing challenges that almost all practitioners face.

Learning to understand and grasp these symbols is one of the areas in which keeping a journal and conferring with others can be exceptionally useful. Here you can record exactly what it is you see, followed by the interpretation of it you have, and see if it is accurate. Then, at a later point in time you can review your materials to see if there are patterns between what you see and the actual correct interpretation.

For many people the symbol will also have an almost intuitive interpretation to the individual reader. This is usually the best reference available, as most common interpretation books are so generalized as to be useless. On the other hand, most readers experience more problems with interpretation then they do with actual psychic impulse, and this is an area where your own desires, fears, and prior knowledge/experience are most likely to attempt to sway you. It can be very hard to tell the difference between 'intuition' and one of these forces.

The thing to keep in mind is that you are not only interpreting a symbol set, but also developing one. The subconscious wants to communicate – and by interpreting on symbols you also develop a personal 'language' with yourself. At first this can be very much like two people with very few common phrases trying to figure out how to talk, but as you grow more accustomed to it, a full language can develop, making the process quite a bit easier.

Exercise: Your Rosetta Stone

The Rosetta Stone was an archaeological milestone that allowed linguists to begin to translate Egyptian hieroglyphics into other more common languages, by establishing meanings to be attributed to the unfamiliar symbols. In the exercise presented below, you can begin to fashion your own "Rosetta Stone" for understanding the symbols in which your subconscious mind speaks.

This exercise is best done with a partner. Set up a comfortable environment for working in a meditative state (lowered lights, comfortable clothing, music if needed). Take yourself into a light trance state, where your conscious mind is relaxed and your subconscious is more accessible.

Once you have reached this trance state, have your partner name something that you may see come up as a symbol in subtle readings. Examples of this can be colors (red, green), basic physical shapes (square, triangle), emotions (anger, lust), health issues (pain, deficiency, etc). In your trance state, do not think about what your partner has said, simply observe what associations spring to mind. Do not try and direct the thoughts; if something absolutely random springs to mind, go with it. Tell your partner what it is you are seeing or thinking of and have zir write down next to the item all impressions you have come up with. When you have finished giving your impressions of the one term, move on to the next.

Continue with several other terms, as many as you can hold the trance state for and that you and your partner have come up with. When you are finished or can no longer maintain the trance state, bring yourself out of it and take a look at your list. If you have achieved a trance state, these are the associations your subconscious makes with these concepts, thus, your symbol set.

You will likely wish to attempt this exercise multiple times with the same list. See if there are any common themes that emerge each time. If you get no impressions for a concept, do not worry about it; move on to the next and try again some other time. You may also wish to do this practice regularly, as symbol meanings can change and adapt over time.

If you are unable to find a partner to work with, you can record yourself reading the list of items into a tape recorder and play them back while you are in trance, giving yourself

time to list associations after each. If you cannot write while in trance, you can have a second recorder to dictate your impressions. Do not try and remember them all up in the end.

Real vs. False Perceptions

Almost no one can assure that they will have accurate perceptions all of the time – the best readers instead can tell when their perceptions are likely to be right, and when they are likely to be wrong. It is this self-awareness that defines a good reader, and not the ability to always be able to get an impression.

The only way to learn whether your perceptions are most likely accurate or not is a lot of practice – ideally, recorded practice, so that you are less inclined to become a victim of selective memory. You should record what your impressions are, what your interpretation of those impressions are and, when possible, any information as to what the 'correct' answer is, at that point in time or later. Some people would go farther to say that you should record your general state when you had the impressions as well. This is helpful later, but probably less critical.

One factor that has been occasionally used to determine whether a psychic impression was legit or not is to attempt to determine how one arrived at a particular conclusion; if there is no logical reason why you reached that conclusion, it can sometimes be more likely to be accurate than one you can logically map out. If you can logically figure out how you got to a conclusion, then that can be evidence of the modeling tendency of the human mind to "fill in the blanks." This is not to say that all psychic epiphanies come with no logic attached, it is just a suggestion to consider when determining veracity.

Another helpful practice is doing work in a group. In most cases, this obviously presupposes a group of people who you can at least somewhat trust, but there are methods of even dealing with that. When you perform an exercise together (such as an energy body reading) have each person write or draw what they experienced – both their individual impressions, and their interpretations of these impressions. Then, and only then, compare notes and discuss results. Writing things down prevents people from mentally re-inventing what they saw. This is something people tend to do unintentionally when presented with information that contradicts with their interpretations.

Because people's individual symbol sets are different it is entirely feasible that you can have more then one set of initial impressions which are different but which communicate the same or very similar results to the individual readers. This is why it is important to keep track of both the impressions and the interpretations of these impressions.

The internal feeling that distinguishes real impressions from false impressions can be very subtle, so learning to work with it can take considerable time. However, it is possible to improve with practice, provided you are sincere in your desires and efforts to improve your accuracy.

Links

An integral part of Kherete practice and ritual are links, the subtle connections between people, objects, and nonphysical entities. Links are most often discussed in relation to the Counselor caste, for it is the Counselor's role to maintain and monitor these connections in ritual. However, links do affect all other castes as well, and should be kept in mind regarding everything from relationships to feeding.

On a fundamental level, links (like energy) are all the same basic things: an energetic bond between two parties, usually depicted and visualized as a cord. However, this can manifest in different qualities and strengths.

Characteristics

One varying aspect of connections is *activity*. Typically, energy flows back and forth along the link. If there is a large quantity of

energy moving through the link, it is very active. If there is no energy moving through the link, it is inactive. An inactive link doesn't mean the connection is nonexistent; it just means it isn't being used. Ever lost contact with a very close friend for weeks, months, or years, and then gotten back in touch with zir? In many such cases, the friendship picks up almost right where it left off, dynamics barely changed, as if only days had passed since the last meeting. That's an inactive connection activating again, with relative ease because the connection never *died*, was never severed. It just went dormant for a time.

Another aspect of connections is *strength*. Often, a very active connection is stronger than a less active bond, but not always. The close friendship mentioned earlier that went dormant would be a strong connection despite its low activity. Links can be perceived as cords, like veins or arteries stretching from one subtle (energetic) body to another. Stronger connections are thicker, larger; weaker connections are thread-like capillaries. Stronger connections, while they may not be active, nonetheless have a higher *capacity* for activity; more energy can course through them at higher speeds than weaker connections.

A third aspect of connections is *depth*. Stronger connections are more likely to also be deep connections, but not always: it is possible to have a strong yet shallow connection, like a broad yet shallow river. Depth describes how close a link is rooted to the core of the energetic body. Casual, light links rarely go deeper than the surface layer of the subtle body--the aura, the "skin", so to speak. These are the connections to acquaintances and casual friends. Most good friendships, attachments beyond a casual level, link into the "meat" of the energetic body--the shell of the chakras, so to speak. A few rare connections are rooted in the very core of the self; these are deep links, often familial in nature.

How can a strong connection be a shallow one? It's not a common occurrence. These are the people you keep at arm's length but spend a lot of time with, who know one aspect of you very well but do not know all of you, the "real" you. This can also occur with unequal connections, which brings us to the fourth aspect.

Direction is another aspect of connections. This refers to the directional flow of energy along the link. Just because a connection links two people and energy flows along it does not mean it flows in equal volumes in both directions. More often, it seems to fluctuate, probably depending on each party's energy surplus or need and the time/attention/effort each party is putting into the relationship at the time. If person A is putting more effort into the friendship (or romantic relationship, or business relationship), zie is also putting in more energy, and so the energy flows with greater volume and intensity from person A to person B. If person C has a deficiency of energy (due to stress, energetic nature, etc) and person D has a surplus of it for whatever reason, there will likely be a directional flow from D to C. Many good friendships, of course, have a roughly equal flow of energy - bidirectional rather than unidirectional - but unidirectional connections or connections with unequal exchanges do sometimes serve a healthy purpose. More on this in a later piece.

A shallow link, even a strong one, is shallowly rooted, like a tree grown into an inch of soil over bedrock. A bit of weight, a hard tug, or a storm can pull it out, roots and all. It's similar with connections. A deep connection rooted at the core of the self can outlast a number of relationship storms, distance, lost contact, a broken friendship, or an ended romantic relationship. Such things might cut off activity on the link, weaken it even; both sides might shield the link, or it might get damaged--but it's unlikely that it will be uprooted or broken (though it's easier to sever a deep link than to uproot it, but that has its own major drawbacks).

Links can be pre-existing. If you meet someone for the first time and have a sense

of recognition, the feeling of *I know you*, that is usually indicative of a connection forged in a prior incarnation, and likely a deep connection. This pre-existing connection can carry its own baggage from the prior incarnation, which often complicates the relationship.

Other times, deep links are forged this time around, a link that starts shallow and grows deep over time. The growth may be sped along by any number of things - sex, energy work, ritual, or close work together in a high-energy atmosphere like theatre - but eventually the link is rooted deep and probably strong as well, unlikely to be removed or rip loose.

Formation

Whenever there is an energetic exchange between two parties (whether that be person/object, person/spirit, person/place, person/person, or any number of other combinations), a link is formed or further developed. This can be brought to a mundane level of understanding when explained in the context of "getting to know someone."

When you talk to someone, you are giving off energy in the form of words, thoughts, attention, and communication of self; it's a sharing of *you* in some small way (or large way, depending on how intense or personal the talk gets). By listening and taking in what you say, the listener is receiving and processing the energy you give off. By focusing their attention and awareness on you, they are giving off energy to you; if they speak in return conversation, they are giving off even more energy.

A conversation, then, is a very basic energetic exchange. Through time spent, activities shared, and conversation traded, two people might exchange a great deal of energy over time; they may grow closer, get to know each other well, and develop a specific relationship dynamic. The connection or link between them grows stronger and deeper as more energy is exchanged.

That is the way it *usually* goes, anyway. Unconscious energetic exchange through normal day-to-day interaction creates and strengthens bonds between people. The more intense and concentrated the energetic exchange is, the quicker and deeper the connection develops.

However, conscious energetic exchange can also affect connections. Links become very intense very quickly if there's a large volume of energy coursing through them. Obviously this can happen through frequent, intensified, deep conversations and personal activities, but it can also "artificially" with conscious energy exchange.

One major conscious energetic exchange is that of feeding, where one person (typically with an energetic deficiency) pulls from another person (preferably with an energetic surplus). This creates a unidirectional link where energy flows from the person being fed on to the person doing the feeding. The kind of feed (surface feed from the subtle "skin"/aura, or deep feed from the "meat" of the subtle body) and how much energy was taken determines how deep or intense the resulting link is.

A particularly intense and concentrated energy exchange is the one that occurs via physical intimacy, especially sexual intercourse. Sex is a very direct, very potent, very intimate exchange; it's no wonder it can complicate relationships so much, and often creates a temporary sense of closeness - but if there's no solid foundation to the relationship other than sex, you can get a similar situation to the one illustrated above.

Links have myriad uses. You can energetically check up on someone you have a link to; you can bypass the shields of someone you have a link with; you can feed or donate from a distance with links, or indeed do much distance energy work via a link.

This has its drawbacks as well, of course. An artificially created link (one formed quickly through feeding/donating or through

ritual, as opposed to one formed naturally and slowly over the course of a budding friendship or relationship) can create feelings of closeness and connection that can be intense, even overwhelming. If you're not careful, this can easily turn into obsessive tendencies towards the person on the other end of the link.

Links are also empathic and sometimes telepathic connections. You may find, especially with a newly formed or newly activated (in the case of links existing from past incarnations) link that you begin feeling emotions that have no rational cause - until you discover that the person you're linked to is feeling that emotion as well.

Mitigating Links

There are ways to mitigate the undesired effects of links. This requires first being able to feel the connection. The following are ways of sensing links.

After grounding and centering, focus on a person that you have a connection to (a close friend, significant other, or family member, for example). It can help to close your eyes to aid concentration, or have a physical reminder of the person nearby (a picture or one of their possessions). Think of how the person looks, feels, and sounds. Think of how you perceive their energy. Think of the things you do together and the ways you interact with each other.

Turn your attention to your heart area, where links most often have their root. Perhaps you only sense one cord, the link to that person, rooted in your subtle body. Or perhaps you perceive a tangle of connections, all of the ones that you possess. One link should stand out among those, prominent in your awareness because of who you're focusing on, and if you sense down its length you should pick up on the person that you seek. It may feel more like a tension or a slight pull towards your friend, rather than an almost-visual cord.

If you are still having difficulty sensing the link, sit in the same room with someone you are connected to. Focus on them and on feeling the line of connection between the two of you. If you manage to sense it while they're in the same room, have them then go into another room in the same building and attempt to find the connection again, this time with your friend just out of sight. If you wish to experiment further, play hide-and-seek with your friend, attempting to find them using only the connection between you.

Once you are capable of sensing the link, you can learn how to shield it. As stated earlier, links bypass shields, as they root within the subtle body and shields are typically placed just outside the subtle body. This means that no matter how good your all-purpose, general shielding is, it won't automatically shield the links you have to other people.

To shield a link, focus on the link as described above. Use whatever imagery works for you in order to filter or shield it: a door slamming shut and bolted, a screen sliding down across the link's breadth, a metal iris spiraling shut — whichever fits the situation. It is perhaps best to put up soft filters (screens, cheesecloth, sieves) instead of hard shields (metal doors, brick walls, massive rock), at least for connections that you want to keep active, friends you want to remain close to. Shielding by its very nature creates distance. Filters are better in cases where closeness is desired, as they allow energetic exchange while lessening empathic overload.

Severing Links

When shielding alone just will not cut it and you need more distance, links can be severed. This is not a decision to make lightly, as severing a link usually results in some level of damage to the subtle body. The damage might be small and temporary, or it can be deep and permanent.For information on severing links, refer to section 58 (Breaking Links) of *The Psychic Vampire Codex*.

Situational Factors

For many psychics, the situation in which they work can have a huge impact on their ability to get impressions and to be accurate with those impressions. Lighting in a room, emotional state, amount you have eaten that day, technique you are trying to use, etc, can all make or break a reader's ability. With practice a reader should be able to work in less and less ideal circumstances, but initially stacking all of the situational cards in your favor is often a good way to go. Truthfully, even very experienced readers who can work under any circumstances often have their readings improved through idealizing their conditions. This is for much the same reason that ritual magic is often exceedingly effective, even though in theory the magician can 'just do it.' Situational factors help to relax and focus the mind onto the task at hand. The environmental factors can also help in some situations to allay fears and cut down on the amount of self-questioning which goes on.

The key to learning what environmental factors work best is remarkably similar to the advice listed several times before – practice and experiment with various conditions, consider recording which work best and which do not work, and then go from there. Oh, and keep good records.

While what conditions are ideal for each person is extremely variable, there are some general rules that seem to apply. The lighting level in the area should be somewhat dimmed, but not dim enough that you actually have trouble seeing. Some people find the level of light emitted by candles to be ideal for this. A similar way to describe this level of light is that it should still be possible – but somewhat straining – to read book-text at this level. If you are energetically-sensitive, the source of the lighting can also be a factor. The energy emitted by incandescent or fluorescent (man-made) lights can be "louder" or more distracting than candlelight, or light emitting rays that are not in the natural spectrum.

Many people find that fasting lightly, or at least avoiding heavy foods, can help with their receptivity. Likewise people sometimes find that being slightly tired can help (while others find the act of reading exhausting, and cannot really work in a tired state at all). Many readers find it important that they feel safe and are comfortable dropping shields and being receptive. For this reason, it can often be helpful to have an area that is already cleansed, warded, and physically safe to work in. This can also help, as the energy of the place itself should be familiar enough so as not to affect the reading. The real key to developing an appropriate situation is relaxation. You should do whatever you need to be relaxed and comfortable, where distractions are minimized or completely eliminated.

The Subtle Body

The subtle reality is a strange and fascinating place. A part of our reality and yet separate from it, the subtle reality weaves in and out of our awareness like smoke or fog. Through our interactions with the subtle reality, it is clear that it functions upon a set of laws, but the most we seem to know about these laws is that they are nothing like those which govern our physical reality. So we return to our original question: how do we perceive the subtle reality? Although it is not easy, it is very simple: we listen, not with our ears but with our whole selves.

The easiest step toward perceiving the subtle reality is to gain a perception of your own subtle self. If you practice meditation or some form of martial art, you may know how to do this already, even if you really did not understand what you were doing before now.

Find some quiet time in your schedule. Put on some loose, comfortable clothes and lay down. You want some place comfortable to do this, but not so comfortable that you will fall asleep. You may want some soothing music playing in the background - just loud enough to be heard, not loud enough to distract. If there is a particular type of incense you feel helps you relax and concentrate better, burn a little of that as well. If you have trouble remembering the visualization, you may want to read it into a tape and play it back for yourself. Try to use an even, soothing tone if you do this, as if you are trying to put someone to sleep with your voice.

Exercise: Perceiving the Subtle Self

Lay either with your hands spread out loosely at your sides (palms up) or clasped upon your chest. Your legs can be held loosely together or crossed at the ankles. Make sure you are comfortable.

First, concentrate on your breathing. Close your eyes and focus on each and every breath. Feel the air being pulled into your body, all the way down to your toes, and feel it leave. As you gain a solid awareness of your breathing, start to feel your heart as well. Feel the rhythm of your heart and lungs moving in counterpoint. Try to expand your awareness to feel your blood as it is pumped through your body by your heart. Feel everything all at once: heart, breath, lungs, blood. Begin to picture a gathering brightness in your chest. As you inhale, it grows brighter. As you exhale, it grows dimmer. Keeping the rhythm of heart and lungs in the back of your mind, start to focus on this light within you.

Once you can see the light inside your chest with your mind's eye, try and see if you can feel it there as well. Every time you breathe, every time your heart pulses, this light grows stronger, warmer. It is stronger and brighter at your center, but now that you notice it, you see that it extends throughout your whole body. The light is carried by the vessels of your blood, running down your torso to your legs, traveling all the way down to the tips of your toes. It travels across to your arms, down to your fingers. It pulses up your neck to your head, filling the space behind your eyes.

Maintain an awareness of your breathing and your heart in the back of your mind. Both rhythms should be very deep and regular now. You will probably also begin to feel a tingling in your body. It may start at your hands or your feet, but it will probably spread all over. It should feel very relaxing, very pleasant -- almost like you are floating.

As you focus on the light within you, you will notice that there are certain places in your body where it is brighter than others. It seems to gather in these places. There is the main sphere of light in your chest, next to your heart. Another sphere gathers in your belly, just under the navel. There is another concentration further down, resting within your genitals. A line of light connects all of these, running parallel to your spine. Above the sphere in your chest you will feel / see one in your throat, and finally, following the spine of light all the way to your crown, you will

see one in the center of your head, behind and slightly above your eyes, so bright it seems to spill out of the top of your head.

Take some time to feel these centers of light inside of you. You are still aware of your blood flowing through your body, so notice how these centers are affected by your pulse and your blood flow. Tiny filaments of light stretch away from every center, twisting, connecting, branching out, filling you with a delicate, glowing, webwork of light. Every time you breathe in, you can feel it down to the tiniest filament. Every time your blood flows, you can feel life running along every channel in your body.

Feel the tingling spread throughout your body. Feel it pulse in rhythm with your heart and your lungs. Feel everything inside of you all at once, and try to keep that whole awareness in the front of your mind. Let go for a while and just be. If you feel yourself drift away from your body a little, go with it. You are not so tied to your body that you cannot leave it. You are light, vibrant, lighter than air. Your eyes are closed, but you can see everything inside of you at once.

Lay back and just experience this for a while. When you feel you are finished, give yourself some time to come back down to ordinary reality. You may feel a little dizzy or light-headed if you sit up too fast, so take it slow for a while. Once you are done with the exercise, see if you can recall that state of whole-body awareness. Try closing your eyes and "seeing" the wheels of light deep inside. These are the centers of your subtle body. They are like organs, and they are vital to the functioning of both your physical and your subtle selves. The many little channels that branch off from them are analogous to nerve ganglia and blood vessels, and they help transport your subtle energy throughout your body.

Once you are satisfied with your ability to sense your own subtle body, try extending your awareness to include the whole room. You can use the subtle body visualization as a starting point. Once you have a strong sense of your own subtle body, extend your senses outside of yourself. Keep your eyes closed, but listen / feel with that same quality that allowed you to sense the wheels of light inside yourself. First, try to get a sense of the room around you. You are probably already familiar with the physical layout of the room, but how does it feel differently from this perspective? Is your awareness drawn to a certain area of the room? Do you feel any presence beyond yourself? You may not feel any spirits in the room right now, but there's nothing wrong with that. Sensing spirits is not the main focus of this exercise. This is just to get you used to listening.

Once you feel the room around you, try to expand your awareness to the house or building you are in. You will not necessarily see everything going on in the room downstairs with perfect clarity. The subtle senses are not always as clear-cut as that. Rather, you will get fleeting impressions of the places beyond, sounds that may have been distant moments before may begin to seem nearer and clearer. You may see images flash before your mind's eye. Try to focus on each one as it comes to you. Analyze it. Try to determine whether it is something coming from your imagination or a legitimate impression from the building around you. You may not "see" images at all but instead feel emotions, sensations, or even smells.

Open yourself up to anything that you might experience. Take it as it comes. Do not doubt the impression, but analyze it. Is it real? Is it coming from outside your own mind? Can you place where in the building it is coming from? Can you determine who or what is making the impression? Is it something from the present, happening now, or something that happened in the past and lingers here?

Things get very uncertain once you move into the realm of subtle perception. Your subtle senses do not really "see" things

or "hear" them. Sight and hearing are just convenient metaphors so your mind can more easily translate the information. If you expect your perceptions to be as clear and obvious as physical sight and hearing, you will be looking so hard that you will miss the real perceptions. On the other hand, you have to be careful what impressions you accept as legitimate. Since so much of the subtle reality can be influenced by a mere thought, it becomes nigh impossible to differentiate between a legitimate impression and your own imagination. The only way to distinguish between the two is practice and experience.

Chakras

The general descriptions and associations of the major chakras in the subtle body can be found in The Psychic Vampire Codex, section 28 (The Anatomy of Energy). Additionally, such information can be found in a variety of cultures and books. Chakras and energy centers are not new topics. The most commonly used system is a six- or seven-chakra system, but there are also one-, three-, five, twelve-, and others. None of the descriptions or placements here should be viewed as absolutes. Just as there is individual variation in the shape and placement of internal organs from person to person, and any anatomist's drawing must be seen simply as a guideline, so, too, will the shape and placement of the energy centers vary from person to person. And there is the added variable of your own perception, which especially when it involves subtle aspects, often influences what you perceive.

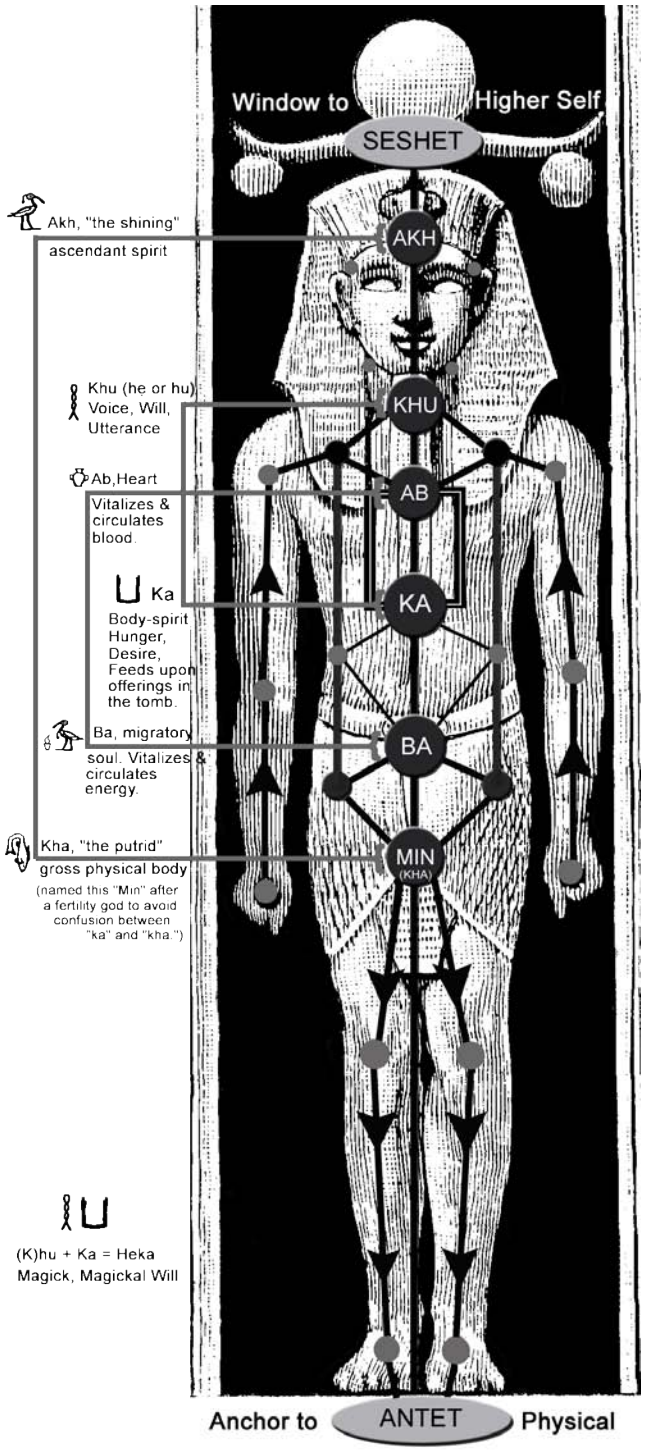

Diagram 1: Chakra Diagram

Table 1: Chakra Table

Egyptian	Sanskrit	Location	Color	Governance
---	Sahasrara	Crown	White	Higher consciousness, deity
Akh	Aina	Forehead	Violet	Vision, perception
Khu	Vissudha	Throat	Blue	Voice, communication
Ab	Anahata	Heart	Green	Emotion
Ka	Manipura	Solar Plexus	Yellow	Will
Ba	Svadhisthana	Navel	Orange	Vitality
Min (Kha)	Muladhara	Root	Red	Connection to physical, sex

Notable Variations: Twinned Center

We have observed in many what appears to be a fusion between this chakra and the one directly beneath it at the Solar Plexus. In some individuals, these two centers seem to function as if they are slaved together, with one being dominant over the other. Typically when doing energy work, we take whichever center is dominant and count that as the actual chakra, for work done on that one almost always crosses over to its weaker twin.

The slaving between Heart and Solar Plexus chakras, especially prevalent in Kheprians, is why we work mainly with five but sometimes with six chakras. The exact number hinges on what centers are actually present in the pontus within the torso and varies from individual to individual.

When the two chakras are twinned, one is typically dominant over the other and the qualities of its weaker twin are reduced or suppressed in that individual. Heart chakra people are more caring and emotional, reaching out into the world around them for connectivity and support. Solar Plexus people are more self-focused, as this is the seat of the Will and the focus of desire. Wants and hungers, are generated and focused here. In many respects, this center can be seen as the Self that is the union of spirit and that particular incarnation. A lot of systems view this as a negative center, for it can be a focus of Selfishness. But a solid sense of Self is essential in magickal workings, so in many ways this is a very vital center.

The Navel and Rebirth

According to most schools of thought, in the space between lives, the soul is removed from earth and the subtle reality and taken to a place of rest and healing. Here individuals are tutored by guiding entities that aid in the soul's evolution. They are healed and revitalized by immersion in the Universal source, and then wiped free of lingering memories and emotions from the previous life. Refreshed, renewed, and relieved of the "burden" of memories, the vast majority of spirits are then sent back to the realm of incarnation to begin the whole process again.

Qualities of the Navel Chakra

It is through this center that an individual can connect with, process, and assimilate external energies. Changes in this center affect the individual's ability to connect with everything around them, emotionally as well as energetically. However, severing the umbilical also establishes independence and individuality. Such a person is no longer sustained by the Source, but they are also no longer bound by that Source. It is the difference between a fetal existence and Being.

Most Eastern energy traditions describe this center as the seat of the subtle power. It is this area just beneath the navel that many are trained to focus on when gathering power. Notably, most of these systems draw power from an external source, and typically from the Source – whether this is seen as Universe or Earth. For Kheprians, energy can be cycled here, but it is the Solar Plexus that gathers and directs energy.

Minor Chakras

Minor centers exist at various points along most larger energy channels. Significant minor centers can be found at the wrists, the insides of the elbows and the backs of the knees. The palms of the hands and the soles of the feet also contain minor centers. Any of these can be used as contact points to create a connection with the subtle energy. However, it is not strictly necessary to connect to these centers in order to manipulate energy. Any physical contact will do, and even physical contact is not always required.

Laterals

The chakras are connected to one another by a main axis that is the subtle reflection of the spine. On either side of this central axis are two other structures, called laterals. If

you were to draw a line from the base of the collar bones, through the nipples and down to the hips, this would fall about where the laterals lie on either side of the main axis.

While there are no major chakras aligned upon the laterals, there are many smaller contact points running up and down the laterals. The major function of the laterals is to serve as anchor points for many smaller energy channels that run throughout the energy centers, connecting them in a complex pattern that weaves a web of light throughout the being.

While the chakras with their main axis are generally easy to perceive, the laterals often require more finely honed sensations to identify. Knowing that they are present is sufficient. Most energy work can be accomplished with just a basic knowledge of the chakras. Knowledge of the laterals is usually only necessary for much more advanced and fine-tuned interactions.

The Path of Incarnation

In the Kheprian system, whenever the chakras are addressed, the typical progression is to start from the Crown and continue down through the Root; this is uniquely Kheprian. In almost all other systems you will encounter, the numbering of the chakras is reversed. Thus, when you consult a non-Kheprian text, the first chakra is actually considered to be the Root chakra. So why does one go top-down when practically everyone else relates to the chakral system from the bottom up?

For a while it was not understood why there was a difference, but after giving the matter some serious thought, the reason became logically apparent. In the traditional view, energy/spirit travels up from the Root, which is most connected to the body and material reality, and culminates at the Crown, striving out of the flesh and into the realm of pure spirit. Kheprians have always felt "right" measuring down from the Crown to the Root.

The difference is a matter of perspective. The majority of traditional writings on the chakras are coming from systems written by incarnated beings who are looking from a physical perspective at the realm of spirit. Yoga, for example, is a discipline that attempts to release the individual from fleshy existence so they move beyond the physical realm. It makes sense then that such a system would begin at the lowest chakra, the one closest to earth/body/matter, and end at the highest chakra, which is furthest from these things.

Kheprians come from the opposite direction entirely. Their natural state is as beings of spirit. They already have a self-aware subtle existence. When they incarnate, they are essentially "coming down" into a body – therefore the progression to them is from the Crown to the Root, spirit moving down through the various levels of fleshly existence. And to be honest, many of them lack a firm connection to the Root, as it is simply too grounded.

As an example, almost all members of the Priest caste have no solid connection to the last chakra (first chakra by other systems), and this significantly affects their ability to ground; most beings ground through the Root, by way of energy channels that travel from the Root, down the legs, and to the minor centers at the souls of the feet. This energetic system very literally connects people to the energy of the ground, or earth. The Priest caste either has to consciously reconstruct / reinforce these channels (an approach that has variable results depending on the individual) or they should ground through their hands, where they have a much stronger set of channels, by laying their hands directly on the ground when and if they feel the need for grounding.

There are other variations in our perception of and interaction with the chakras that only come up through comparisons of Kheprian knowledge with that of other people, but all of this only goes to show that even on the level of subtle anatomy, there is room

for individual variation, and simply because someone's energetic structure is different from what is seen as "normal" – i.e., the majority – does not mean that system is abnormal or unhealthy. If that structure functions healthily for the being that possesses it, there is no reason to judge it as "wrong" or seek to fix it.

Chakra Self-Cleaning

Your energetic system functions best when the chakras are clean and clear of blockages. This mediation is intended for you to clear out any blockages in your energy centers. It starts with the Seated Meditation, which you may already be familiar with, and then focuses internally, on the energy body.

Preparation:

Sit up, back straight, legs placed about a foot apart. Your feet should preferably be bare or just in socks, and they should be placed flat against the floor, toes pointing forward. Lay your hands palms-down on your thighs, shoulders loose and relaxed.

Press your tongue up against the roof of your mouth. The tip should be up against the backs of your front teeth and the mid-section should be against your hard palate. Lightly flex the Hu-Yin point at the center of the root chakra. This is a little tricky, as it is a muscle structure we are generally unaware of. In women, it corresponds to the Kegel muscle. In men, it will feel like you're trying not to go to the bathroom. What you are doing here is closing a circuit within your body. By pressing the tongue to the roof of your mouth and flexing the Hu-Yin point, you are forcing the energy to cycle within you as opposed to flowing out:

Close your eyes and relax. Try not to concentrate too much on the tongue or Hu-Yin point, but keep them in place all the same. Take slow, deep, measured breaths through your nose. Feel yourself breathing in vital energy and breathing out the stress and distractions of the day.

Once you feel somewhat relaxed, tilt your head up a little and, with your eyes still closed, turn them as if you were looking at something in the middle of your forehead. This might feel a little strange at first, but basically, the idea is to turn your vision inward. Turn your hands over in your lap so they are cupped, palms-up, fingers slightly over-lapping. Continue to deep, measured breathing.

By this point, you should feel a pleasant tingling in various portions of your body. Your hands should feel warm, and you should feel a kind of opening of expanding in the center of your head. Focus on the feelings. Turn all of your thoughts and perceptions inward, to your body. Feel the energy circulating through you, gathering in your hands, flowing from root to center to crown and back again. Feel your feet ground you to earth and feel the energy in your head carrying you upward, toward the universal flow.

Now that you have focused generally on the energy flowing within you, turn that focus toward a more specific awareness of your energy body. Try to get a sense of the major centers where energy collects and flows out again. These are your chakras. Some may "shine" brighter than others. This is generally because the energy flows better through them. If any of them seem unusually dark or off-color, or if the energy does not seem to be flowing through them correctly, then they have blockages that need to be removed. Even chakras that seem to be gathering energy can be blocked with too much of it. In this case, the energy goes in, but then it becomes static and stops moving. This can be as detrimental as a chakra that so blocked it will not let energy in at all.

Self-Cleaning:

Once you have gained a good impression of your energy body and any problems there might be, turn your focus toward your Root Chakra. This is centered around the genitals and the base of the spine. Cup your hands around this area, and visualize some of the energy you have gathered in yourself focusing

down to this area. Breathe in. As you breathe in, visualize the energy flowing into the root chakra and spiraling around dynamically. Hold the breath for a few counts, and make the energy intensify and "shine" in the chakra. Then breathe out, and envision the energy as it reverses its spiral and flows back out of the chakra. As you breathe out, open your hands outward like you are releasing the energy you had gathered into the chakra. Link this gesture with your breathing so you imagine that you are expelling any blockages or other negative material that was caught in the chakra as you exhale.

Apply this same pattern of exercises to each chakra from the root upward. Cup your hands around the energy center, gathering energy, breathe in and agitate the energy within the chakra with a spiraling flow, hold this for a second or two while the energy intensifies within the chakra, then breathe out, opening your hands to release the energy and also visualizing any negative build-up being expelled with your breath.

You should place your hands at centers a few inches beneath your navel, just under your solar plexus in the middle of your abdomen, over your heart, at your throat, and at your forehead. There is a center at the top of your head that is not exactly in your body. In this case of this chakra, cup your hands loosely around the space it seems to occupy, follow the visualization steps, then open your hands to release.

Coming Back Down:

Once you have gone up the ladder of your chakras, you may have a very heady, spacey feeling. This is because a lot of your energy is focused high up in your crown chakra, overbalancing it from the root. You need to ground and come back down.

With your hands still up near your crown chakra, turn them so the palms face you. The index and middle fingers should be mostly straight and held together. The ring and pinky fingers should be bent and relaxed. The thumbs should also be relaxed. Take a deep, cleansing breath and start letting it out through your mouth very slowly. As you exhale, draw your hands slowly down the front of your body, from crown to root. Imagine that as you exhale, your hands are pulling down on your energy, smoothing it out and balancing the flow through all the chakras.

Pass over each of the major areas that you previously worked on, and when you get down to the root, slide your hands over that final center and lay them palm-down on your thighs. Your hands should be warm and very tingly, and some of this sensation should pass into your legs. With your hands on your thighs, feel the energy flowing from your crown to your root, from your legs to your feet and from your feet out into the earth.

Take a few moments just to feel and breathe. When you feel balanced and grounded again, draw yourself slowly out of the meditation. Open your eyes, stretch, and breathe. You may want to get a glass of water at this point to help cleanse your system (weak green tea only lightly sweetened will also do). Do not eat anything heavy or greasy for at least the next hour as your body adjusts to the energy work you just did.

Subtle Body Variations

The subtle body has a very complex physiology that cannot and should not be reduced to just those energy centers that are most noticeable. All of the energy centers should be approached as parts of a much greater whole, and in order to truly understand the healthy functioning of that whole, it is necessary to understand the complex interaction between the myriad of centers.

The interactions between the energy centers are not a simple thing. Some of the centers are clearly inter-related in how they affect the energy of the organism, but in some cases, an inter-relation is not immediately noticeable, yet is crucial all the same. When dealing with the subtle body, it is important

to keep in mind that affecting one part of the organism can and will affect the whole, and sometimes the effects and inter-relations are subtle and unpredictable even to the most experienced energy worker.

Always get a good feel for the energy of a person you are going to be working on before you undertake to affect their energy body in any significant way. Map them out and make note of any variations in their make up from what you are familiar with. These things can be crucial to the proper interaction of your energy with theirs in any healing or other technique.

It is also necessary to keep in mind that not all individuals have precisely the same metaphysical anatomy. There are always anomalous individuals, and sometimes what seems "broken" or "blocked" on an individual is actually a part of that person's unique but healthy functioning. There is a theory that some spirits from very different realms of existence can and do incarnate in human bodies. While there may not be definitive scientific proof, some of the things noted by various energy workers seem to confirm such theories.

Do not let the notion of "alien" souls intimidate you. Just because these individuals are from a different place spiritually does not mean that they may not need healing or other energy work done to them at some point or another. So keep the descriptions above as your working model of a basic energy body, but be prepared to encounter individuals who differ radically from this norm. Apply what you know, adjust where necessary, and remember what you learn for future encounters.

Otherkin

"Otherkin" is broadly defined as someone who identifies as something other than human. For the purposes of this discussion, we will work under the more narrow definition of otherkin as someone in a human body who is, spiritually or energetically (regardless of identification), something other than human. As such, otherkin subtle anatomy can vary from the subtle anatomy of a healthy human being. Fae-kin, angelic otherkin, dragonkin, and other winged types might have extra major chakras in their back and where their wing joints would be, for instance.

There are many theories as to the cause of otherkin, and it is entirely possible that not all 'kin have the same cause for their otherness. This may affect how their otherness manifests. Someone who spent many lifetimes as a dragon so that the draconic energy and anatomy left a strong imprint on the soul will probably have some subtle body abnormalities. Someone who has a wolf totem influencing them to the point where she identifies as a wolf might have wolfish behavior and a feral edge to her energy, but probably will still have a standard human subtle body. Someone with a "misplaced soul" would have abnormal subtle anatomy, but someone with an archetypal, psychological cause for their otherness probably wouldn't.

Another concept to be aware of with otherkin is shifting. This is more common with therianthropes (animal-identified otherkin) and animalistic mythic otherkin (western dragons and kitsune, for example) than with fae-kin or angelics. A shift is when the nonhuman nature becomes more pronounced. Some of the types of shifts are as follows:

- Mental shifts: Sometimes abbreviated as "m-shift" in the therian community, a mental shift is when the otherkin's thought patterns, instincts, and behaviorisms become distinctly more "other" - more wolfish, more feline, more draconic, and so on.
- Phantom shifts: Sometimes abbreviated as "ph-shift". A phantom shift is when phantom limbs, typically wings, a tail, or ears manifest to the otherkin's perceptions.
- Physical shift: This is only mentioned here due to frequency of discussion on the therianthropy community. A physical shift, or "p-shift", is when a human

body literally, physically changes into a nonhuman one. This is scientifically impossible, and p-shifting claims are met with much skepticism and derision in most parts of the community.

Being otherkin is, first and foremost, an identity. It is a way of viewing oneself, a paradigm from which a person can interface with his environment. Yes, it influences behavior, provides certain impulses, but ultimately it is the individual's responsibility to control himself and function in society. Being other should never be an excuse for behavior. If your canine nature provides a desire to chase cars in high-speed traffic, that is fine, but it is neither safe nor appropriate to act on that desire. It is the otherkin's responsibility to manage their shifts, instincts, and urges so that zie is healthy and functional in human society.

The Holistic Body

A topic that is often gleaned over on related sites & forums is the importance of maintaining all aspects of health. Energy work, especially excessive energy work, can take a severe toll on the body. When a newly-awakened vampire starts complaining of not enough energy, they often get tips on how to get better at the subtle/psychic things, not even addressing a pretty much national, if not worldwide, problem of physical health. Not properly maintaining the rest of the body can send a perfectly normal energy worker into numerous states of temporary vampirism when zie just gets tapped out and the body does what is necessary to survive. If you are finding yourself frequently going into a state of energetic deficiency, examine your current lifestyle.

- *Sleep*: Are you getting the full recommended amount of sleep for your age group? If you're not sure, 8 hours is usually a good number to shoot for. Are those 8 hours relatively uninterrupted, or do you keep waking up (to use the bathroom or randomly)? Do you wake up refreshed? If not, there are several factors you can investigate. Poor sleep can be caused by a bad mattress, so it might be time to look into replacing it, or seeing a specialist to determine the right type of mattress for you. Restful sleep occurs when brainwaves reach the delta state, and some people may have difficulty doing so. If you are waking up tired, you might wish to look into some relaxation CDs designed to put you in delta sleep.
- *Exercise*: While you do not have to be an Olympic athlete, some mild exercise helps maintain physical health; gets the blood (and energy) moving. If you are not in the best physical condition, try going for a short walk a few times a week, or get a membership to somewhere with a pool. If there are places near you, yoga, tai chi, and qi gung can be relatively low-strain. Additionally, Gaiam is a company that sells DVDs for yoga and tai chi that can be used in your own home, on your schedule.
- *Stress*: Are you consistently under a lot of stress? While being in high-performance mode can be nice for getting things done, it burns through reserves faster. If you find yourself stressed out often, see about reducing your commitments. If that is not possible, try taking up a relaxing hobby in your off-hours. If you have little to no off-hours, or hobbies also stress you out, try learning and practicing some form of meditation. Some techniques can be done while driving or at work, if you cannot set time aside.
- *Diet*: Many people do not, in actuality, have a good and healthy diet. People tend to eat too much junk and processed food, or the wrong-sized portions, or the wrong types of food for your body. Not everyone is built the same: some need more protein, some need more carbohydrates, etc. If you wish to maximize your total body

health, look into nutritional counseling. Some vampires and energy-workers have reported requiring a higher-protein diet to maximize energetic health. No, that does not mean you have to go carnivore if you have been vegetarian or vegan; there are non animal-based proteins. However, if you are finding yourself being deficient more often, examine your diet. Increasing the flow of energy in your body (by removing blockages or just getting things used to moving) can also increase your metabolic rate. You may find yourself needing to eat more often, or healthier meals (in some cases, even losing weight) without increasing amount of exercise.

As a related note to diet, try taking vitamins. Even if you have a relatively healthy diet, it is not always balanced in the sense of getting all the nutrients you need. A daily multivitamin can help ease many problems, and there have been some stories from multiple sources (nothing tested or verified by actual research) that increasing B12 intake seems to help vampires manage their hungers. Either way, extra B12 does not really hurt.

Vampirism

Am I a Vampire?

Time and time again, the members of House Kheperu and the Kherete administration receive emails and letters asking, *Am I a vampire? How can I tell?*

Firstly, vampirism is not something that can really be diagnosed over the Internet – which is usually how we are asked. Truthfully, even with seeing someone it can be difficult to tell what exactly is going on. Vampirism is diagnosed primarily through its symptoms, and those symptoms disappearing when energy is taken in. Because all but the most severe symptoms of vampirism are difficult to medically detect, and because it is almost impossible for an external person to constantly track the energetic flow of a person, the determination of vampirism is going to be a determination the person is eventually going to need to make for zirself.

The first clue as to if you or someone else is vampiric is to look for unconscious feeding patterns. Sometimes it is suspected due to the most common unintentional 'donor' having ill health or problems with exhaustion when around the unconscious vampire. This unintentional donor is usually someone very close to the person – such as a parent, child, or lover. They may recognize the symptoms of being drained and thus identify the 'vampire' – sometimes in joking terms.

Vampirism can also be suspected by the person themselves when they recognize their own previously subconscious feeding practices. Often unconscious vampires will engage in moderately complex feeding processes even without any awareness of what they are doing. This would be similar to an empath reading a description of empathy and realizing 'hey, I've always done that…' Usually it is people who discover their vampirism this way who are the most keen to verify their experiences.

The key to keep in mind when attempting to diagnose vampirism is that almost anyone is capable of learning all of the various energetic practices. Anyone can feed, and most people can even derive some form of benefit from it – even if that benefit is limited to being able to use the energy for an energy working. What makes someone vampiric is the need to take in energy in order to simply maintain one's basic operating functions. If you are becoming deficient because you are doing excessive amounts of advanced magic or energy work, you are not necessarily innately vampiric; try refraining from all the spellcraft for a period and see if you recover naturally. If so, then you need to do less energy work or find a source other than your own vital energy to fuel it. Because of this, while unconscious feeding practices are definitely a clue to look for vampirism, the real test is to stop feeding and see what happens.

Listed in this section are numerous methods for getting unconscious feeding under control. Exercise these practices for a period of about two weeks. If your mental state, health, and spiritual state declines during this period, then attempt a conscious feeding. After this conscious feeding, if your condition improves, repeat the experiment to screen for flukes. If you consistently find that your well-being deteriorates when you abstain from feeding, and only improves with feeding, then you're probably a vampire.

Make sure you're not doing anything else which would be likely to skew the results – for example, changing your diet or sleep patterns. Exceptional stress can also skew these results and give a false positive. Also make sure that you are actually controlling your feeding and not having it 'escape' through other means. It is particularly difficult to control feeding while sleeping, so if you regularly share a bed make sure you are not feeding off your partner. It can be exceptionally difficult to get feeding under control if you are not used to doing so – as such, if you find your

state deteriorating for a week and a half and then suddenly wake up feeling fine, make sure you have not just unconsciously fed. Because of these two false-positive and false-negative situations the actual determination of vampirism can get difficult, especially for people who are not otherwise familiar with energy work. This is why it is absolutely necessary to repeat the experiment several times and during different situations to make sure that you are identifying things correctly.

If the symptoms you experience are physical or psychological, you should also try to eliminate physiological reasons by getting a checkup from a medical doctor or psychologist. Be honest about your symptoms, but do not suggest your potential cause of vampirism. Some doctors will admit to just plain being stumped by the symptoms presented, others will attempt to label it as another condition and give treatment that ends up being a failure.

It may be possible, should you know any experienced energy workers, to actually have them attempt to bind you to control unconscious feeding. However, this method is generally not recommended except as a last resort, as the unfortunate effect should you actually turn out to be vampiric can be rather unfortunate. Unconscious feeding is much like gasping for breath – by the time you do it, you usually need to. How long you can 'hold your breath' is a matter of practice, experience, and self-control – but you should not push it beyond your natural ability to do so.

Note: It is very important to make this as prolonged an experiment as possible. As mentioned before, anyone can learn to take in energy and derive a benefit or "high" from it. Since there are highs, there are also lows, and the symptoms of this "pranic withdrawal" can resemble very closely the symptoms of vampiric deficiency. The difference between withdrawal and true deficiency is, like other conditions of withdrawal, at some point the symptoms vanish with no treatment applied, once the body readjusts. If you are in withdrawal from energy, you will eventually return to healthy without feeding. This can also be determined by repeated experiments.

Causes

While there is no one universal source for or cause of vampirism, the plethora of different explanations can be summed up in one basic statement: vampirism is the result of an unbalanced equation. Regardless why, how, or how often it happens, the energetic needs of the body are not being met by the natural methods of production. This does not necessarily equate to a broken or dysfunctional system, merely a case of differing needs. Most often, a vampire's system naturally produces either insufficient energy in general, or insufficient energy of the specific type required. As was stated in section three on energy, there is a wide variety of types and sources of energy, so in some systems while much energy is produced, it does not match what the body needs. While there can be a variety of explanations or variance in the specifics, there are generally four major types of vampirism seen in the community. No one cause is inherently better than another, or evidence of the "true" vampire.

Intentional Subtle Body Alterations

The intentional alteration is often most familiar conceptually to those drawn to the Kherete program, as that is what causes vampirism in the Family of House Kheperu. Many years ago, the Priests in the Temples conducted an intentional alteration on the subtle body whose side effect was vampirism to various degrees. Just as the physical body can be altered, so can the subtle body, but since the subtle body is shaped by will and not just a scalpel, it is considered very difficult and is generally not possible to do without special circumstances and years or lifetimes of practice and study. The natural cycles of energy have moved things to a point where it is not quite as easy to manipulate subtle reality as

it once was, so the deck gets even higher and higher stacked against the performance of such alterations successfully.

Subtle Body Damage

Closely related is the idea of subtle body damage. If the flow of energy is stagnated or disrupted, a vampiric condition can possibly result. If the flow is altered in certain ways or for too long, permanent damage can result that may last over lifetimes. Violent deaths in particular can have a traumatically damaging effect on the spirit or subtle body, as can unchecked subtle experimentation or excessive unsafe magical work. If subtle body damage in one lifetime is too severe, it can lead to a soul being unable to reincarnate until enough time has passed that the damage has healed somewhat. Damage can also manifest as a wound or hole where the auric body leaks energy to a degree where effects are noted. This is sometimes referred to as the Leaky Bucket theory.

Parasites

If your body is functioning normally enough to sustain you, but something or someone else is draining you, the equation becomes unbalanced again. If there is someone in your life, like a neighbor or coworker who is always needing your shoulder to cry on or always wants you-and-only-you to help with every single crisis—which happen along on an hourly basis—then you may find yourself doing the same to others, or drawing in energy subconsciously. This can also sometimes happen from parasites of the astral type, conglomerations of energy (sometimes referred to as "shells") that may or may not be sentient which latch onto you if it senses a weakness and draws energy from you to sustain its existence, in response leading you to drain from others. In most cases, these parasitic cases are referred to as temporary vampirism because once the parasite is removed from your life, the vampirism on your part ceases. This sort of case can also happen for donors who are utilized too much by vampires, wherein they experience a sort of sympathetic vampirism, as their system tries to replenish itself when food and rest won't cut it.

Spirit/Body Divergence

As was referenced above in the Otherkin section, many people are coming to a conclusion that they possess attributes suggesting their souls might not be entirely human. If a non-human soul is running about in a human body, in some cases this can result in rather differing needs. The soul type may need a very specific type of energy that is not produced naturally by the human body. Likewise, if the soul type is markedly different in structure from the body, a high amount of energy could be needed to maintain the connection, or the conversion rate could be very inefficient. No one knows precisely why such things happen, but there does seem to end up being a high overlap between the two communities.

Feeding

While the topic of feeding has been covered somewhat in section II of *The Psychic Vampire Codex*, there were some topics that did not receive sufficient coverage, or would benefit from having some additional considerations added.

The Balancing Act: Awakening Vampires and Feeding

Feeding and need are probably two of the biggest challenges a newly-Awakened vampire must struggle with. For the newly-Awakened, it often feels as if the hunger for energy is an overwhelming fire that threatens to consume one from within. This letter, written by Michelle Belanger to a newly-Awakened psychic vampire, addresses crucial issues of balance, energy maintenance, and feeding in a compassionate and ethical way.

> Awakening is a special period, a crucial period of adjustment where every aspect of what you are will seem heightened beyond your ability to bear it. Awakening is

where any sense of the glamour of being a vampire is stripped away, and you come to the crashing realization that this is a real need that impacts you on profound levels and that you will have to deal with for the rest of your life.

That's not to say that no good can ultimately come from what you are and the talents this opens up in you. However, as you stand at the very threshold of awareness and acceptance, the first things you will be aware of are pain, suffering, hypersensitivity, and intense inner struggle. It is only by coming through this trial by fire and coming to terms with the bad parts of what you are that you will begin to learn how to harness the good parts of your nature.

The alternative to this is something we see at work with certain elements within the vampire community. Some who Awaken to their nature never seem to get past the "dark side" of vampirism. Rather than learning to find their inner strength, they focus solely on the negative side of vampirism. Such lost individuals wear the pain, angst, and inner struggle of the newly-Awakened like some sort of badge that makes them more special than anybody else. The real tragedy here is that, in embracing only their pain, they never truly learn to harness the transformative power to which that pain serves as merely a door.

When you are first adjusting to a conscious awareness of your hunger, you may find that you need to feed much more often than every two weeks. Going without feeding for a week or even a day can start to have seriously negative repercussions on your system. Part of this arises from the fact that you're simply not accustomed to dealing with an awareness of hunger, and so every little sensation is amplified by its very newness.

Another part of the greater need often experienced during awakening and adjustment involves a learning curve. The more you feed consciously, the better you become at it. Over time, you learn to feed more efficiently, making each exchange count. You also learn naturally to process the energy more efficiently. This allows you not only to store energy between feedings but also to use the energy you have more effectively between feedings so you're not running yourself low constantly.

A lot of this learning curve hinges on becoming aware of what your specific needs are, how you tend to expend energy, and what situations will push you past your limits of coping energetically. Some of it is also learning the right attitudes toward feeding and need. My best advice for feeding as efficiently as possible is to do so very consciously and with focused intent. Do not feed for the mere sensation, and do not feed simply to make the pain of hunger go away. Approach the exchange as something meaningful and sacred, honor what passes between you and your donor, and you will find that you get more out of the experience overall.

In time, you will learn that certain situations and certain environmental conditions will impact your levels of need. As an example, I have always had trouble with traveling. Travel requires me to move from a safe and established center of energy to energetic situations that are unfamiliar and, at times, overwhelming. Psychic vampires, by their nature, are highly sensitive to energy of all sorts, and the shift in energy from a rural setting to a city is a huge change for one's senses to cope with. Given that we are also all empathic, there is suddenly all this new energy from people to deal with, and the feel of the collective energy of people is distinctly different from city to city.

Even though you may have no conscious awareness of how things feel back in your familiar setting, you have still adjusted unconsciously, and a part of you

knows just what to expect energetically. Getting picked up and unceremoniously dumped into a completely new environment, suddenly you must become conscious of the energetic backdrop of a place, the feel of the people, the energy in the land, and how various other environmental aspects impact the flow and tides of energy. I find this adjustment very draining, and until very recently, I could not travel without draining myself to the point of illness within a few days. Some vampires also experience this kind of reaction to a change in seasons, climate, or even the cycle from night to day. Over time, you will learn what energetic tides you are most sensitive to, and you will learn when you need to brace yourself for change. As you learn what situations tend to overwhelm you energetically, you will also begin to learn how to prepare yourself for those situations, mitigating the overall impact on your health.

A lot of a psi-vamp's development in the early stages of awakening is about balance and learning how to most efficiently address energetic needs. Once you have learned where your boundaries and limits lie, then you may begin experimenting with the techniques that allow you to function best within those boundaries, honing your particular experience of psi-vampirism into a manageable one.

Getting Unconscious Feeding Under Control

All true unconscious vampires unconsciously perform a repeated, low-level energy drain. Vampires seem to fulfill a function of the negative aspect of the Universal flow, and as such, taking energy seems to be part of how a vampire naturally interacts with the environment around them.

For the most part, the energy that is taken is ambient energy. Ambient energy is not taken directly from a target but generally from the vampire's surroundings. However, people who come into close proximity with the vampire, and people who make an energetic connection to the vampire, can become included in this constant drain.

A vampire can unconsciously initiate contact with a physical touch. Vampires can also unconsciously initiate contact by engaging someone in conversation. When the attention of others is for some reason focused on them, vampires can also connect and unconsciously feed.

When a vampire is in an environment where the targets of such feeding may notice and be offended by the action, this can create embarrassing situations. There are also situations in which it is undesirable to take in the ambient energy of a location because this may have unwanted effects on how the vampire functions and feels, if the energy is not filtered properly.

To stop unconscious feeding, it is first necessary to understand the mechanics at work behind feeding techniques. Although we function essentially as energetic black holes, in order to take energy from our environments, we must first extend some energy of our own. For example, we do not just suck ambient energy up like a Hoover. We are actually extending tiny tendrils and fans of our own energy all around us and collecting ambient energy as if through a satellite dish or a solar array. When we take energy directly from other people, that initial connection is made when a portion of our energy extends to them and latches onto their subtle body. Thus, to prevent us from unconsciously feeding, we need to harness techniques that help us keep our energy to ourselves.

Donning Your Armor

Shielding is one way to prevent us from taking the energies of others in. However, it is not always easy for a vampire to shield. It is natural to us to want to reach out and interact constantly with our environment, and many energetically-aware individuals (including vampires) find shielding techniques make

them feel weighted down or suffocated.

To get around this, you can use a variety of tools that help achieve the effect of shielding without lengthy meditations or complicated visualization techniques that lock some energy construct around the subtle body. The ones included below rely on simple psychological cues that indicate you are closed off from the energy around you, and they function on the principle that what keeps energy out also keeps energy in.

For example, if you go to the mall, and you do not want to interact with the energy of everything around you, you can wear a particular coat as well as a pair of leather gloves, or other item of clothing. The coat symbolize personal armor, as it covers both physically and energetically, thus keeping your energy in and preventing outside energies from connecting. The gloves add to this because hands often serve as a powerful focus for taking energy. The gloves also prevent one from picking up energy from every object that is handled, which can be a common side effect of vampirism that can lead to strong and sometimes disturbing impressions. What are the mechanics behind this simple technique? As you know, energy can easily pass through most material objects, and so the gloves and jacket themselves are not really blocking energy in a physical sense. Instead, they serve as conceptual barriers between you and my environment. They provide an extra layer of separation between you and everything around you, making it easier to hold energy in and keep all other energy out. This can also be a useful technique for empaths, so they do not become overwhelmed by the emotional impressions in public places.

Because the 'armor' is only symbolic it should be kept in mind that it is also entirely possible to do this with a much smaller object or reminder – such as a piece of jewelry. This way you do not have to deal with the sometimes socially awkward situation of trying to wear 'armor' in situations where it may not be appropriate.

Closing the Circuit

Another technique that can work to prevent you from taking in energy comes from a New Age book on psychic self-defense. The technique was presented for those people who go out into crowds and unconsciously spill energy all over the place. Natural givers, whenever they are surrounded by people, it drains them of energy because everything automatically flows out. A vampire is just the opposite of a giver – instead of everything flowing out, when we go out into a crowd, everything flows in. Despite the fact that these two effects are polar opposites of one another, they are simply two aspects of the same process. It is really quite simple. It functions on the principle of closing a circuit.

When you feel that you are reaching out to the energy around you and beginning to pull it all in, simply clasp your hands in front of you and hold them close to the point of your solar plexus, just beneath your ribs. You can also lock the fingers of one hand over the other, and as you do so, think about the energy of both hands locking and interlinking, so the flow of energy is limited to your body alone, and there is no interaction with the outside environment.

Crossing your arms upon your chest can work with the same principle. Especially if you lock your hands around your elbows, crossing your arms upon your chest keeps your energy inside you. For us, that also means it keeps other energies out. If we keep our energy to ourselves, then we're not as likely to be constantly pulling on everything around us.

Given time and practice, these techniques can become second-nature, so whenever you go out into a large crowd, or you find yourself in a situation where you need to strictly control your feeding to avoid offending others, you will be able to reign yourself in with a simple gesture or a thought.

Minimizing Need

Before we even begin with techniques, there are several things that should be mentioned about this section. Firstly, not every technique is likely to work for every person. While some techniques are fairly universal, others seem to work only in specific cases. In a few cases exactly why the techniques work for some people is not entirely understood. As a general rule of thumb, if it is ever been shown to work it is mentioned here. Secondly, many of these techniques include trade-offs, which may not be desirable. The lessening of need may well not be worth the trouble of the technique itself – even in the event it is effective. It is necessary to analyze the benefits and costs of each of these methods.

The basic framework underlying these techniques is remarkably simple – it works under the premise that a vampire is essentially someone who does not produce enough energy to maintain their system – meaning their energetic input from normal sources is not sufficient for their energetic output. Therefore, these techniques largely focus either on methods to try to maximize your natural (non-feeding) input and minimizing your energetic output. Another section adds a bit on trying to be effective with feeding. A few oddball useful notes are also included which really do not fit under any of these categories, and these are the more speculative techniques – but as some can be very effective in some circumstances, they are included in the event that they may be able to help someone.

First, we begin with the obvious: Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual state are all intimately connected. Whatever effects or stresses one of these states will affect the others. From a practical point of view this means that, for example, if you are sick your energy need will go up. If you are stressed or depressed, your energy need may go up. If you are dieting and trying to subsist on less physical sustenance, your energy need may go up. The first and most obvious step to take when trying to minimize need is a remarkably mundane one – try to stay in good physical, emotional, and mental health. This means trying not to get physically sick and taking care of yourself when you do. This means exercise, taking vitamins, and eating healthy. This means trying your best to keep your emotional state in a good place. This means avoiding mentally and emotionally exhausting situations as is possible. Fasting will increase need. Not sleeping will increase need. As a general rule of thumb: whatever other needs you leave unfulfilled will attempt to express themselves in an energetic form, so take exceptionally good care of yourself.

The second obvious area to look at is environment. There are many 'general' good ideas involving trying to clean up your environment to reduce causes of energetic loss. For example, if your environment is extremely stressful and filled with bothersome energy you may wish to consider trying to cleanse and ward it. As with all cleansings, physically cleaning up the space and getting rid of any existing energetic problems can help. Ideally the space should be safe enough that you have no need to shield within it and yet can remain completely comfortable and unperturbed.

Many vampires have cycles – often tied to a seasonal cycle that reflects itself in smaller iterations. The three versions most commonly seen of this are a winter-based cycle, a summer-based cycle, and a transitioning cycle. A winter-based/night-based cycle vampire will have difficulty with heat, and will tend to want to be nocturnal. This can end up almost stereotypical to the vampire myth, but that does not make it less true. A summer-based/day-based cycle vampire will have difficulties with cold and an effect that can almost seem similar to S.A.D. (but may not respond to light treatments). Some people also have a cycle that peaks in strength at the transitions around Beltane (May 1st) and Samhain (October 31st). The theory behind this type of cycle is that these individuals are highly sensitized to natural energy. There is a reason the

old Pagan religions structured their holidays around significant changes in agricultural rhythms or natural seasons: nature moves with its own energy. Priests and priestesses of many of these Pagan religions in much older times would spend many long years synchronizing their bodies to these natural cycles. This seems to be much more rare, but notable. Understanding these cycles are important only in that in some cases they can be extremely prominent. Fighting them can take considerable energy, and taking preventative or avoidance measures to try to minimize their impact can be useful. Now, obviously, most people do not have (for example) the ability to become entirely nocturnal – but there are often smaller and less obtrusive changes you can make to facilitate these cycles. For night-based vampires, keeping the air-conditioner at a cool temperature, and warding private spaces may be helpful in avoiding disruptive energies. Warding your vehicle, for example, may make moving around during the day considerably more pleasant. For day-based vampires, keeping physically warm can help, as can not turning the heat down at night. Really, it comes down to realizing what is comfortable and making whatever little changes can be beneficial to support that comfort. Once the obvious environmental and physical energy sinks are taken care of the next step is to begin to look at your own actual energetic input/output.

Now, again it seems that there are different categories of vampirism in terms of feeding. For some people there seems to be a finite amount of energy they are capable of taking in, and that is satisfying and complete. Energetic need is 'stable' in that over time it does not radically increase or decrease except due to external factors. The second sort of vampirism almost seems like a bottomless pit: the more energy one takes in, the more energy that is wanted. It is a never-ending need and can only be satisfied (at best) momentarily. For this sort of need, satisfying it beyond the point of 'enough' will actually increase the desire for energy the next time around. This sort of energetic need can obviously be incredibly problematic. You need to figure out which sort of need you have and act accordingly. If you seem to have a 'stable' need then your best course of action during feedings is almost always going to be to sate it – as that will allow the longest time period until it next becomes necessary to feed. However, if your need is of the never-ending variety then you are going to have to very carefully limit the amount of energy you take in until you are taking in 'just enough' and then forcing yourself to stop. Over-feeding will actually increase the desire in the future.

As a note, it almost always seems to take more energy to dig out of a deep stage of need then it does to maintain a less deep one. The first few feedings from deep need are likely to be very inefficient. As stages of need are passed through the body first increases in efficiency (by shutting down 'non-critical' parts of the system) but in order to 're-start' these systems there seems to be a considerable energy need. Please note this is just an illustration of observed behavior – the exact mechanisms behind this are not really known. What is known is that it takes a large amount of energy to pull out of the deeper stages of need – most of which is wasted and rejected. Starve-and-binge cycles are not an effective way to minimize energetic need. If you want to try to minimize your energetic intake for ethical reasons, starvation is not an effective route. There really is no point tormenting yourself by holding out until you are forced to feed.

When it comes to the actual quality of energy and feeding technique effectiveness seems to be a highly personal matter. In regards to these there are only a small number of general tips: The closer the contact *generally* the more efficient the feeding. *Quality* is often as important, if not more important, then quantity of energy. Consciously processing energy can increase its effectiveness in many cases – but exactly what constitutes 'processing' can vary depending on your

energetic system. Taking in energy that is already as close as possible to your current energetic signature/frequency/pattern is usually the most efficient – this can be facilitated by 'syncing up' with your donor prior to feeding. In the process of 'syncing up', you and your donor cycle energy freely back and forth between each other, completing a circuit. As you do so, bits of your energy will blend with zirs, and bits of zirs with yours: similar to moving water from the heated surface of a pool to the cooled depths. As the cycle continues, both of your energy signatures will move towards a state of equilibrium, frequency-wise. Other energy workers often seem to have energy that is easier to intake then non-energy workers. Many people find that energy coming from someone in a heightened state (such as arousal or exhilaration) is more fulfilling then energy from a normal state. Most psychic vampires also discover, generally after a period of experimentation, that there different "flavors" to differently-charged energy, some being inherently more fulfilling or satisfying. Energy carries different qualities depending on where it came from and in what context. Some psychic vampires are "negative energy feeders", who derive the most satisfaction out of energy that is given off during emotional conflicts or venting. Many psychic vampires find sexual or erotic energy extremely desirable.

Desire to sleep often seems a natural reaction for many vampires immediately after feeding – this seems to help with processing in many cases, so when possible, follow this instinct. In most (but not all) cases, your instincts regarding feeding are probably right – at least begin by following them as a baseline. The biggest exception seems to be with conscious energy processing – conscious processing will initially be less effective, but will eventually become more skillful and efficient then subconscious processing as a *general rule*.

The next stage of trying to minimize need is to take an intimate look at your daily energetic output and to work on eliminating inefficiencies. This should probably only be taken so far, but it can be a very useful exercise to at least look into. Obviously, this exercise requires some level of energetic sensitivity – but if you are consciously feeding, that should be sufficient. The first step is to try to get a skilled energy worker to look at your energy body and see if there are any obvious blockages, gaping wounds, or other problems. Ideally, the energy worker should be familiar with vampirism in some form. This process is tricky, because oftentimes the energy bodies of vampires are unusual to begin with – and attempting to 'fix' them can be very harmful. The classic example is the missing Ba center in the Temple (Kheprian) Priests. Yes, that missing Ba center is definitely the source of the problems – but fixing it would have a lot of other undesirable effects. Carefully fix/clean out what can be fixed or cleaned out. (At this point in time, neither the administrators of the Kherete program nor the members of House Kheperu have heard of someone actually curing vampirism through working on the subtle body – but it is a definite theoretical possibility. Being that it is so theoretical, a self-diagnostic technique will not be included because honestly it would be too difficult to perform, and the process of actually attempting to fix damage on what is probably already an odd system is too advanced for what is really meant as an introductory text. However, those previously experienced with the techniques involved could obviously perform this process on themselves, if desired.)

The next step is to begin looking for smaller energetic outputs that are unnecessary and can be cut back or eliminated. At first, just observe yourself and your own energetic interactions – especially during states of heightened emotions. The two most commonly problematic expenditures seen are unnecessary shielding, and unnecessary glamour. Emotional outbursts also often tend to expel energy. From that point you can choose if you feel reigning in the energetic behavior is worth the trouble. While this process can be intensely useful, it is often one of the more

difficult to actually implement – as doing so will often require such things as not energetically reacting when you become emotional, or trying to prevent yourself from having emotional reactions at all.

Now we move from the techniques that are much more generally useful to the techniques which will only work for a limited number of people or in limited circumstances.

The first is the most obvious – and that is taking in from alternative energy sources. This involves attempting to ingest energy from a variety of sources and seeing if you can find a way to process them into something useful. The single source that seems to be able to be utilized by the largest number of vampires is a bit odd: the energy of large trees. The general effect seems to be that the process of getting this energy is extremely slow and minimal, but effective. Other commonly tried sources include large natural bodies (the earth, a large body of water, the sun, etc), 'divine' or spiritual sources (the Goddess, YHVH, Horus, etc), animals (either by feeding directly or through eating flesh/drinking blood), natural events (the energy from lightning/storms, a fire, etc), and various abstract concepts (music, etc). The list of various things to try is essentially infinite, but the effectiveness is highly individual. While not all vampires can process non-human sources of energy to the end result of a complete substitution, sometimes a portion of the energy needed can be supplied by alternative sources, which can be useful if human donors are difficult to find.

The second technique works only in some cases where the energetic need is tied to movement as well as sheer amount: attempt an energetic 'reset' or flush of the system. Exactly how to do this is, again, individual; basically it involves a large expenditure of energy that is then immediately re-captured and re-processed into the system. A technique involving capturing and recycling the energy from orgasm would be one example – but this process could also be effected via simply channeling the energy outwards and then bringing it back in. As a note, while this technique does seem somewhat useful in extending the time before feeding is required, in some cases it can have a bit of a spike-then-crash effect, so experiment with it before you decide to try to use it for anything critical.

It should be noted that most of the ways of minimizing need above apply primarily to psychic vampires and hybrids (vampires who require both psychic feeding and sanguinary feeding), but there is another large grouping of vampire out there whose needs have not been addressed yet. As the Kherete material is open to sanguinarian (blood-drinking) vampires as well, we can hardly discuss minimizing need without discussing their conundrum. Being that, unlike psychic vampires, sanguinarians pretty much *require* consenting donors in order to feed, many go for extremely long periods without being able to feed sanguinely. While we know that modern vampires will not die if they do not regularly feed, life can get rather miserable if months or years are passing without a drop of blood. Sanguinarians have been known to "vamp out" or "twoof", wherein they experience an almost psychological or behavioral shift that makes functioning very difficult, if not impossible. When these cravings or rages get severe and there are no donor prospects on the horizon, sanguinarians find themselves utilizing several types of palliatives that have been stumbled upon by various vampires over the years. While some of the palliatives seem obvious, others it is unknown why precisely they work. Perhaps there is some nutritional deficiency or craving being addressed, or perhaps it is a psychological comfort (not completely ridiculous, being that many of the palliatives can look, smell, or have the consistency of blood).

The first, and most obvious palliative is animal blood. While it is not something one typically finds in grocery stores, it can be purchased from local slaughterhouses or butchers. If going this route, be sure to ask only for beef blood, as pork blood carries

too many health risks, and it must be fresh and sterile for human consumption. Some butchers will want to know why this is being purchased; you can hardly be completely honest without worrying about involving the authorities. Never fear, there are many dishes from various cultures that involve using some portion of animal blood as an integral part of the recipe, like blood sausage. If you manage to acquire animal blood, it generally must be dealt with fairly soon, before it turns. Since blood doesn't freeze well without chemicals, many sanguinarians report mixing it with wine or V8, which allows it to keep for longer, it covers the taste, and it can be consumed in small amounts as needed. Closely related to animal blood is rare meat. If you are unable or unwilling to go the straight blood route, you can go to a steakhouse (Outback does a quite nice version) and order as rare as they will make it. The other carnivorous possibility is some of the internal organs, particularly liver. There has also been a suggestion of a product known as deer blood pills. They are generally sold out of New Zealand online and are provided for holistic health reasons and are relatively inexpensive.

If you are more of the vegetarian persuasion, or cannot afford to go with the routes above for whatever reason, there are other liquids that, while bearing varying degrees of similarity to blood, seem to still help with the cravings. It is unknown why, and results vary between individuals. The variety of liquids suggested include milk, vegetable juice, tomato juice, pomegranate juice, cranberry juice, orange juice, raspberry juice, grape juice, beef or chicken broth or bouillon (often in a mixture); some will even include iron supplements or protein powder, like a smoothie. The other food items of some success are fresh fruits and vegetables, yogurts, salty foods/beverages, and spicy foods/beverages.

Note: The palliatives are generally referred to in the greater community as substitutes. However, the term "substitute" is somewhat of a misnomer. The alternatives to blood do not completely alleviate the need, and a sanguinarian cannot return to full health on palliatives alone. The palliatives only allow a sanguinarian to prolong the period between feedings, but the need for blood is still present.

Performance and Exchange

Energy exchanges do not have to occur exclusively between two people; whole crowds of people can be involved. As long as all parties involved are giving attention to one another, then there's an energy exchange happening on some level.

The best example of such an exchange is when a performer is on stage and the audience is getting more and more pumped. The performer sends out energy with everything the he's doing, and the crowd takes that energy and gives it back to zir with their attention, their excitement and their joy at seeing zir perform. Zie catches this and cycles it back, and the exchange just keeps going on, with a higher quality of energy being produced so everyone feels exhilarated and on top of the world.

Some people make much better performers than others. We often describe these people as charismatic or magnetic. Such people have an innate ability to project their energy to a crowd, connecting with other people and drawing their own energy out in return. Whether they're conscious of this gift or not, they take that energy and they cycle it, whipping up the emotions of the crowd to intensify the energy they've got access to, and keeping everyone's attention firmly focused on them.

The conscious ethical psychic vampire uses this to zir benefit, often being involved in theater, singing, or other performance, and making a conscious effort to maximize this process. The energy generated can be much higher quality than what is gathered at a random or unfocused crowd, like a mall. Additionally, the conjoined effort of performer plus audience likewise yields energy of a

higher quality, and there is a sense of implied consent. The energy is thrown at the performer by the crowd, and the performer is not generally trespassing within the bounds of the individual subtle body to draw out more. This makes it an attractive option to donor-less psychic vampires.

Requisite Draining for New Vampires

Anyone who is vampiric should be fed from at least once. This should be more than a light feed, so the person may feel what it is like to be drained extensively. The person should pay attention to the sensation of being fed from, as well as the various stages experienced as the energy levels drop down from normal to drained. This serves two functions. For one, it gives the vampiric person a better understanding of the stages one undergoes when being fed from. The vampiric partner is then better equipped to observe these stages in the donor, and know when the donor is getting into dangerous or uncomfortable territory. Secondly, the draining can help the vampiric person come to better understand zir own stages of need. Although being fed from typically sends a vampiric person very rapidly through these stages, if that person pays close attention to the various sensations along the way, it is possible to begin developing mental guideposts that mark each stage from "normal" to "deep need."

A second advantage for having a vampiric person experience an active drain is so they understand the mechanics of serving as a donor to others. Although it is rarely desirable for those who are highly vampiric to act in the donor role, certain emergency situations may call for just such a service. Consider how often it comes about that someone who is vampiric simply cannot obtain a regular donor. For some, the inability to find any donor at all can escalate to an extreme state of need. When a friend or housemate is experiencing such an energetic emergency, it may be feasible for another vampiric individual who has a surfeit of energy to fill the role of donor, if only for one or two exchanges. In this way, someone who resonates with the Priest caste can help to sustain another Priest-like individual, at least for a short period of time. It should be noted that such arrangements can only be maintained for a short period of time before both partners end up reaching a state of need. But it remains a workable solution for energetic emergencies.

The final advantage for this process is to help a mildly vampiric person learn how to consciously feed. Many people who are latent vampires, or whose needs are so mild that they have been able to meet them unconsciously through ambient and casual surface feeds, will be catapulted into a full state of need with this exercise. The experience will not only allow them to become more conscious of how important energy is to their systems, but it will also put them in a deep enough state of need that they will subsequently have to feed with conscious intent in order to replenish themselves. In such cases, an experienced vampire should be present at the end of the exercise in order to help guide the feeding process.

The process of draining the vampiric individual can be approached either as a ritual or as a simple exercise. The formality of the exchange will depend largely upon the situation and the participating persons. Please keep in mind, however, that the experience will be a significant one for the person who is being drained. The process should not be approached lightly, but should be given the respect it deserves. Also be prepared for the experience to have a profound impact on the person undergoing it. They are likely to feel a little unsteady immediately afterwards, and some may even feel ill. For the next few days, they are likely to continue in a semi-vulnerable state, being hypersensitive to energy, possibly experiencing past life memories, and sorting out internal perceptions and emotions which the experience dragged to the surface. Aftercare is imperative, and this is best carried

out by the main person in charge of the draining itself. This person should ideally not only be experienced at energy exchange, but zie should also have some experience teaching and trouble-shooting for individuals undergoing fluctuating or unusual energetic states.

Caste Considerations

If the person to be fed from is just generally vampiric, and does not closely correspond with any of the castes, then it is acceptable to have anyone who is strongly vampiric take from them in order to drop them into a deep place of need. If the person strongly resonates with the Priest caste, ideally, the person draining them should be another Priest. A Priest or Priest-like individual should perform the drain for those who strongly identify as Counselors, however, such individuals will have connections to reserves that even they themselves may not be aware of.

Thus, if the person being drained resonates Counselor, an extra step to shield them from their outside sources should be taken before the draining commences. Warriors or those who closely resonate with the Warrior caste may be the best choice for setting up these shields. It is important to keep in mind that the Counselor's connections should not be cut or otherwise eradicated, but some method of efficiently blocking their ability to draw energy from these outside sources must be established in order for a drain of any truly significant quality to be achieved. The block should be maintained for fifteen to thirty minutes immediately after the drain, so the Counselor-type can fully appreciate the sensation of being drained.

If the person to be drained is a Warrior, or strongly resonates with the Warrior caste, a different approach should be taken. Of all castes, Warriors are the least vampiric, and they may not even have an interest in experiencing a strong drain. It can be helpful for Warrior-types who are often in close proximity to Priests just so they can identify the different stages of need in a Priest and respond accordingly. Warriors who possess a strong leaning toward Priest should also consider undergoing this exercise.

There are a couple of hurdles to overcome when the subject of a significant drain is a Warrior. First of all, the Warrior's natural shields will make it very hard for most vampiric individuals to make a strong enough connection to effect a drain. Some Warriors have unconscious defensive responses to what their systems will perceive as an attack, and so the possibility of a violent energetic response should also be taken into account. Care should be taken to insure that the Warrior is in the most relaxed and open state possible, and that zie is making a conscious effort to suppress any defensive or aggressive responses.

The person performing the drain should not be a Priest. Should a Priest attempt to drain a Warrior, the results tend to be highly unpleasant for the Priest. Because the flow of energy naturally goes from Priest to Warrior, attempting to feed against this flow is difficult at best, and can leave the Priest filled with a type of energy that zie is unable to ground or to process. The energy taken from a Warrior by a Priest has a highly destructive resonance to it, and having it in the system can be outright painful for a Priest. With careful focus, the Priest can harness the energy and redirect it toward some magickal purpose, although by its very nature this energy gives rise to destructive magicks. If the Priest is unable to redirect the energy for whatever reason, a safe alternative is to have two or more Warriors ground the Priest.

The flow of energy from a Warrior naturally goes to a Counselor, and those who resonate Counselor are best equipped for draining the volatile energy of a Warrior. Not all Counselors are focused enough to maintain the kind of drain necessary for taking a Warrior down low enough energetically to experience need. To this end, I recommend having more than one Counselor work on the Warrior, and at least one of these Counselors should have extensive experience in energetic

techniques like dynamic exchange. Such a Counselor already has a solid grasp on how to reach into another person's energy and begin forcing that energy to work for zir.

The Counselor skilled in dynamic exchange or related energetic techniques should lead the group and direct everyone in how they should proceed. The Warrior is best drained when zie is deprived of the connection to earth, and so the feet should be off the ground. Having the Warrior lie down is ideal, and depending on the Warrior, further measures should be taken to prevent the natural grounding and connection with earth. Approach this much in the same way as the Counselors' connections to outside sources, blocking the connection if need be. Drain the Warrior as thoroughly as possible so that all the stages can be experienced, and keep the Warrior at the lowest point of drain for at least ten to fifteen minutes. This may require a constant, low-level pull to prevent the system from beginning to replenish itself.

It is also recommended that there be no Priests or Priest-like individuals in the immediately proximity of the Warrior being thus drained. Warriors are perhaps the most efficient of all of us at ambient and long-distance drains, and their systems will quite naturally just reach out and beging draining the Priests. If a Priest has a particularly deep tie with the Warrior being drained, that individual should be cautioned to consciously block their connection. If this proves difficult, one or two Warriors should facilitate in shielding the Priest, kept in a separate room, so that the Warrior does not simply reach out and drain.

Practicing Feeding

In all cases, the individual being drained should be forced to experience an extremely low energetic state for at least ten to fifteen minutes and no more than thirty minutes immediately following the drain. At the end of this time, willing donors should make themselves available to the drained person. The ideal donor will be the individual or individuals who just performed the drain, as they will already possess a surfeit of energy from the ritual. Additional donors of the appropriate types should be brought in so that the burden is not placed on one person alone. At least one person who is not involved in these energy exchanges should oversee the feeding to make certain that the newly drained individual does not overwhelm anyone.

Appropriate donors by caste are as follows:

- For Priests: Counselors, or other Priests. Also, non-vampiric individuals who naturally have intense or high energy.
- For Counselors: Other Counselors, Warriors, and any non-vampiric individuals with intense or high energy.
- For Warriors: Priests or non-vampiric individuals. Intense energy does not seem to be a pre-requisite, although it should be noted that with non-vampiric individuals, Warriors feed best through violence, fear, or confrontation, and these are unlikely to be ideal feeding situations for such volunteers.

Donors

While some vampires are able to get by with a lifetime of ambient energy, others have more pressing energetic needs and must take energy that is closer to the core. In these cases, the Kherete administration advocates the use of consenting donors, people who know what you are to some degree and have freely agreed to help, either by donating energy or blood. Donors are not objects or meal tickets, but generally cherished friends, oftentimes lovers, and should be treated as such.

Negotiation & Expectations

If you are fortunate enough to have a donor, or someone who might be willing to become a donor, then you have a very valuable gift that merits the taking of special precautions in order to preserve that relationship. Like all relationships, communication

is key. Your donor has needs, just as you do, and it is important that zie feels comfortable expressing them to you, and getting them met. There is no one right or proper vampire-donor relationship; it is up to the individuals involved to determine what is right for them. Some vampire-donor relationships are intimate and romantic, between lovers. Others tend more to the businesslike side of the spectrum, where vampire and donor either have no other relationship to each other or owe the other nothing. It can be dangerous, if not abusive, trying to work out a relationship when each of the participants has extremely different expectations. This almost invariably breeds resentment, confusion, betrayal, and other hurt feelings that will eventually lead to the dissolution of the relationship. Additionally, many first-time vampires or donors have little to no grounding in the way such things are, and may have an idealized or romanticized notion of said relationship that is mostly gleaned from fiction or movies.

When setting up a first donor relationship, there are several important aspects that need to be considered for both the vampire and the donor:

- Where will donations take place? Some vampires can feed subtly on someone in public, but may prefer something quieter. It doesn't have to be the bedroom, but at least reducing the chance of a random stranger or psychically-aware individual intruding can be nice.
- Will there be a set schedule or will it be on an as-needed basis? If there is a set schedule, could there be accommodations if the vampire is in a period of higher need or other sort of crisis and needs extra? How should the vampire best broach that subject, or will there be a set of signals or protocol? Some donors find that they benefit from regular energy donation, so will there be a way for the donor to suggest increasing the feeding for zir benefit?
- Will this be an exclusive relationship or is it up to both donor and vampire to see how many people they are capable of supporting? A vampire with a high need may wish to have multiple donors so as not to put too heavy a strain on one. A donor who has multiple vampires in zir life, or gains benefit from regular donoring may wish to take on multiple vampires to support, provided the health strain does not become too heavy. What is the tone of the relationship? If it is not a romantic relationship, how will the vampire-donor relationship affect others? Does the donor have a spouse or significant other who is not involved in all of this? How much is confidential or secret?
- What will be the method of donation? Aside from energy vs. blood, there are still breakdowns in either. Energy donation can be from a distance, with contact, or with intimate contact. There are also levels at which energy can be taken (surface, core, chakras). If sang donation, how will the blood be drawn? Most sanguinarians, if able to feed regularly, need to take very little blood at a time. Lancets, such as those used by diabetics, are a popular means as they are fairly safe for even novice users and relatively pain-free. Razors or scalpels can also be used, if more blood is needed, but both the pain and the risk factor can rise there. Razors also tend to scar if not given proper aftercare. Syringes should only be used by someone who is trained in their usage, either from phlebotomy courses or nurses' training (if this prospect interests you, some community colleges offer a 1 year or less phlebotomy course you can take). In either case, the decision should be made based on the experience and comfort levels of the participants involved.

- While you may end up finding a donor amongst your friends, there could be things about your friends that are important in this context you are not aware of, like medical history. For sang donation especially, up-to-date (within the last 6 months to 1 year) results are mandatory. Although the risk of contracting blood-borne illnesses from oral consumption might seem slim, you certainly do not want to be that 1 in a million chance. If the potential donor is on any medications that have a blood-thinning side effect, that could make donation risky. Also take into account activity level; from blood or energy donation, there is usually a recovery period. For some it is brief, but others may take a day or more. It is not to mutual benefit if your donor needs a long recovery but has a physically-demanding schedule.
- What will be the general post-donation procedure, if any? Some donors may desire or require a certain amount of aftercare, whether that is medical, nutritional, or emotional. Having a healthy meal that includes protein and sugars is often recommended for quick, problem-free donation.

Once all factors have been decided, some people may wish to draw up a statement or contract. This is not so you will have something to take to court, more because, as was mentioned above, the memory is hazy territory. When left solely to rely on what is remembered, confusion can result, which can lead to arguments. Contracts are not required, it is merely a suggestion, allowing all parties to have an indelible record of expectations, so that it is less likely one party will come back later with "I never agreed to that" or "I expected something different from you." While your contract may take a variety of forms, included below is a sample contract that vampires and donors may choose to use or amend.

The Donor Bill of Rights

by Belfazaar Ashantison, with a supporting cast of good friends, Demoness Barbie, Maggie Bones, Spooky and his beautiful Des

This Bill of Rights is to promote the continued safety of the most precious of gifts to us, their life essence. It is suggested that this be signed by both the vampire and the donor on a 30/60/90 day trial basis. After this, the contract can be resigned for an extended period of time which can be either the 30/60/90/ or 6 months to 1 year. At the end of these contracts, discussions can be made as to whether or not changes should be done. What will be allowed and what will not be allowed.

1. As a donor, I know that it is through my personal sacrifice that the vampires needs are met. It is my loving nature that allows this relationship to continue. It is my right to decline to feed the vampire for any reason.
2. As a donor to a vampiric being, it is my right to know that I am in a vampiric/donor relationship that will be mutually beneficial to both me and the vampire I am donating my life essence to.
3. I am the essence provider. It is for me to decide whether or not I am able to give of my essence to the vampire I am with. I must be allotted time to heal and regain my essence in order to better support my vampiric partner.
4. At no time should my wounds not be allowed to heal.
5. At no time should I feel stressed about giving of my essence, if at any time I feel stressed, I have the right to back away from the feed, without being or feeling threatened by my vampiric partner.
6. Should I feel threatened in any way, shape or form, I have the right to seek guidance and council from other donors and leaders of the vampire community.

7. As a donor to a vampiric individual, I have the right to know that my position as lover, friend, family, roommate should not be jeopardized by my not wanting to give of my essence. In the slang, "it should not cost me my ass to be a donor."
8. As a donor, I should also respect the needs of the vampire and try to learn more about zir feeding habits in order to help stabilize zir imbalances in energy.
9. 9) As a donor in a vampire/donor relationship, I realize that though I have many necessary rights, I must also take cares not to abuse the person I am donating my essence to. These same rights afforded me in this Bill of Rights should also be extended to the vampire I am donating too.
10. Ultimately it is my right to know that I will be safe in all aspects of the vampiric/donor relationship and should I ever feel that my safety is jeopardized, I have the right to walk away clear and free.

Ultimately, it is our (both the donor and the vampire) responsibility to insure that we are not abused. It is our (both the donor and the vampire) personal responsibility to leave a vampire/donor relationship that we feel is abusive in any nature. We cannot be abused unless we allow ourselves to be.

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The Alchemy of Dynamic Exchange

Dynamic exchange is a feeding technique that is used when a donor does not really have enough energy to sustain a vampire, but the vampire is in need.

For the Dynamic Exchange, the feeding partner initiates things by starting to take from the donor's energy. Once an initial contact has been made and a steady stream of energy is being taken from the donor, the donor then takes a small amount of energy back from the feeder and begins refining this within zirself. As more energy is generated from the refinement, more energy is given to the feeder, and a larger amount can be taken by the donor to continue the transmutation and raise the frequency of what is being exchanged.

In this way, a sort of feeding loop is set up between the two, with the feeder taking the greatest portion and the donor taking back, circulating that energy within zirself, concentrating it, then using the energy to vitalize both zirself and the feeder.

Through this technique, a relatively small amount of energy achieves the potency of a larger amount and the feeding exchange can be drawn out and sustained by the donor for a much longer period of time.

This sort of exchange is ideal between two individuals who are both naturally feeders and who ordinarily cannot produce much energy on their own or cannot generally draw from an outside source. The alchemy of the exchange and refinement essentially maximizes the usefulness of any energy exchanged so that both partners can be fulfilled.

Intimate Exchanges

An hours-long conversation with a really good friend can get pretty intimate. You definitely connect with zir, and you open yourself up to zir on a lot of different levels. However, there is really no kind of human

interaction that's much more intimate than the interaction between you and your lover. In exchanges of this nature, we touch one another's energies very, very deeply.

Have you ever felt like you were "falling into" the body of your lover -- or like you two had somehow merged on a level beyond the flesh? This feeling occurs when your two subtle bodies cross into the same space and a deep and very intimate exchange of energy occurs.

For this to happen, you have really got to let down all of your boundaries. There are many different levels to your energy; these range from that which exists just on the surface -- which you are usually pretty comfortable having just about anyone interact with -- to that at the deepest core of who you are. This core, your deepest and most intimate energy, resonates most strongly with what makes you "you." By touching and interacting with this energy, another person can gain intimate knowledge of who you really are. This is the level where there are no masks, no words, nothing but "is", and it is a part of ourselves that we safeguard from all but a very select few.

If you look at your energy as being arranged in a series of layers, each layer has a shield or a boundary that separates it from the last. Your will controls the permeability of these layers, and the more intimate the energy, the stronger an affect your will holds over it. So for someone to get at the very core of you, you have to let them past the surface, past a number of different walls that you maintain (consciously or not), through one intimate level to another slightly more intimate level and onward till they've gotten to the very center. This can be a long, slow process, but if they are also engaged in opening themselves up to you, allowing your energy into them deeper and deeper, the resulting exchange is like a kiss of souls. It is that point in sex that everyone strives for but very few attain, and it is perhaps the most exhilarating and amazing kind of energy exchange we are capable of.

When You Cannot Find a Donor

Firstly, the primary objective when dealing with a state where you do not have an available consenting donor is to try to find one. This can be awkward and difficult, but it is also imperative. A true vampire *must* feed. Generally failure to do so will cause rapidly deteriorating mental condition and health followed by uncontrolled unconscious feeding. Feeding directly from non-consenting donors is generally regarded as unethical – though in emergency situations controlled non-consenting feeding is probably better then uncontrolled non-consenting feeding.

When you are in a situation where you do not have an available donor you need to begin reacting long before need becomes apparent. You need to begin to seek out a donor, as well as going through steps to make sure you minimize your energy use to prolong the time you can subsist between feedings.

Low energy need may cause you to want to physically eat in response. As a note, while energetically feeding might help you keep going during a fast, generally eating more physically will not make you feel any better energetically. It is bottomless hunger – you can find yourself full until you feel sick and yet still feel hungry. It is good to recognize this state in yourself to prevent gorging in the early stages of need (as in later stages sickness often causes a loss of appetite or inability to eat.). Some psychic vampires have reported difficulty with physical food in stages of moderate to severe deficiency, including lack of desire for food or occasionally pain and discomfort in digesting.

If you neglect yourself physically, you will find need heightens. Even after the point where your appetite disappears due to need, you need to force yourself to eat – regularly. This sounds much more obvious then it often

feels once this process has begun. Sleep is also necessary, and trying to push yourself without sleeping will raise your energy need.

The first option to try is to attempt to keep yourself as sustained as possible via ambient feeding. This can be a somewhat difficult process, as one of the stages of need tends to be an inability to shield out outside energy. Situations that are ideal for ambient feeding (places where there are lots of energized people) can become overwhelming. Often, one of the symptoms of need is an intense desire to avoid these places as a means of self-protection. The energy required to shield – or heal yourself after being shaken up – needs to be balanced against the ambient energy gained. As a general rule of thumb, a focused and energized group tends to be less aggressively difficult to deal with. So, for example, a concert or movie is likely to be less disorientating then a mall on Black Friday (the shopping day after Thanksgiving) – though both may have plenty of ambient energy available.

A second option to consider is the case where you do have a donor – but zie is not available. In many cases links can facilitate long-distance feeding. Different people find different levels of effectiveness using this technique, but for some it can be a near-substitute for actual contact feeding. It can certainly supplement other techniques to try to equalize out energy levels. In general long-distance feeding as a matter of subsistence should be done more often than you would think is necessary, and started long before need becomes apparent. Because of this, if you do not have a donor locally and intend to try to subsist exclusively on long-distance feeding it is recommended you start feeding immediately and then feed as often as possible without straining the donor – up to and including feeding some every night provided that such feeding will not increase your overall need level.

At this point, the line gets crossed from ethical to unethical and the purpose becomes minimizing harm to the self and to others.

Firstly, the minimum necessary for subsistence should always be done – that means the minimum depth of feeding, and the minimum amount of energy necessary. The purpose here is to make it through daily life while attempting to find a willing donor, not to use this as a continuing feeding methodology. Whatever feeding method is used here should also be supplemented by ambient feeding, and good health practices to minimize the need for energy overall.

Any individuals selected (for nonconsensual feeding) should be extremely healthy, energetic, and ideally *not energetically aware*. While energy workers almost universally make better donors, they're also far more likely to be offended and to potentially react rather violently to being fed from. Understand that in feeding from someone who has not given consent, you can be perceived as attacking them, and from the perception of most energy workers they are entirely justified in retaliating. Even people who are not *consciously* aware may be *unconsciously* aware of your feeding and react negatively to it. In general, if you feel yourself being shielded against or pulled away from – just stop and move on.

Because links form from repeated feeding, you should strive not to use the same person multiple times. Feeding without permission is bad enough, feeding without permission and then creating links and all the various tie-ups that can occur with that is much worse – both ethically and practically.

It should be understood that we are not issuing a blanket condemnation to all of those who feed on nonconsensual donors. In the opinions of House Kheperu and the Kherete administration, this type of feeding is not recommended and should be avoided at all costs, but we do understand that on occasion it comes down to matter of the least harm. We would expect that those who identify as Kherete would only go this route in rare emergencies, not as a preferred route.

Ethical Perspectives on Psychic Vampirism

The Ethics Continuum

The topic of ethics is a challenging and complex subject. Ethics can be distinguished from morals because morality, typically dictated by a religious tradition, is also typically predicated upon the notion that the world functions in terms of black and white. With a moralistic paradigm, there is good and there is evil, and it is a simple matter to discriminate between the two. However, anyone who is actually lived in this world understands how facile that view can be. In real, everyday life, rarely do we encounter clear black or white -- instead, everything is patterned in infinite shades of gray.

Ethics are not predicated on notions of black and white. Rather, ethics acknowledges the shades of gray and seeks to establish reasonable guidelines for proper behavior that take into account situational variations that can affect the absolute value of an action. Morality cannot always be adequately applied to things that we must do for survival.

For example, murder is wrong, yet the soldier who kills on the battlefield is no criminal, and few would blame a person for killing in self-defense. Stealing is also wrong, but most people would agree that the man who steals a loaf of bread to feed his family should not be viewed on the same level as the man who steals an inventory of diamonds. Ethics accounts for these gray areas where some actions that may be wrong were more right depending on the situation. Vampirism falls deeply into these gray areas.

Anyone can take energy. In fact, everyone actually does. Each and every person in this room is, at this very moment, engaged in a complex interchange with the energy of the environment around them. Each and every one of us is both giving off energy and taking energy in. This is a perfectly natural process. Each person has a different ratio of give-and-take, and for each person, this ratio fluctuates based on a myriad of factors including physical health, psychological well-being, wakefulness, and mood.

So, in light of that, what makes a vampire? Vampires tend to need to consistently take more than give, and in most cases, take mostly human, vital energy in order to maintain well being.

So now we come to ethics. If each and every one of us naturally takes some energy and if some of us, especially those were awakened, can do this consciously and willfully -- what is actually wrong?

In regards to vampirism, feeding ethics tend to fall on a spectrum ranging from predatory perspectives to the point of view that feeding in any form is ethically (and perhaps morally) wrong. There are several distinct points along this spectrum which are commonly held, and can be independently defined.

Darwinian Vampirism

> As the most predatory of vampiric ethical systems, we have Darwinian vampirism. This is based on the notion that taking energy is a right, and vampirism is nature's go-ahead to exercise that right, regardless how the people being taken from feel. The idea here is, if you can take it, then it is yours.
>
> You will find this attitude among Satanists, the Temple of the Vampire, and some members of the OSV. Most people would agree that this is the least ethical of attitudes and vampirism. House Kheperu is strongly against this perspective.

Robin-Hood Vampirism

> Next we have Robin Hood Vampirism. This is predicated upon the idea of have's and have-not's -- where anyone with a decent amount of energy is typically a "have" and a psychic vampire is a "have-not". The good fortune of a "have" to possess an abundance of energy is seen as a

justification for a vampire to take that energy away for themselves. This, though not as unethical as Darwinian Vampirism, still tends to be predatory and poses several ethical flaws. While "theft" of this sort can be justified in truly extreme circumstances, even among vampires, such circumstances are rare. More often than not, this becomes a rationalization or excuse to abuse others for their perceived good fortune.

Pragmatic Vampirism

Pragmatic Vampirism occupies the middle slot. This is all about gray areas. The basic goal of a Pragmatic Vampire is to feed only from willing and capable donors, yet the Pragmatist acknowledges that these can be hard to come by. It is accepted that some circumstances demand a vampire take from unaware and unwilling targets or suffer terribly zirself.

In Pragmatic Vampirism, the choice to feed in a predatory fashion is based upon the balance of needs. It is already known that taking energy from a target who is unable to consent will cause at least some discomfort. This discomfort is weighed against the discomfort endured by the starving psychic vampire. If it seems that a better, more ethical opportunity to feed will not present itself within a certain window of time, then the Pragmatic Vampire will deem it an acceptable choice to feed.

Consensual Vampirism

The adherents of Consensual Vampirism will feed only ambiently, or from donors with informed consent. They believe that while feeding may not be innately unethical, the act of impinging on someone else in order to take it is. The distinction between this form of ethics and Pragmatic Vampirism can be a thin line – distinguished only in times of difficulty, as a follower of Consensual Vampirism will not resort to predatory feeding under any circumstances, while a follower of Pragmatic Vampirism will resort to predatory feeding in times of need.

Sustainable Vampirism

After Consensual Vampirism comes the adherent of Sustainable Vampirism. This is the person who, regardless of their own state of need, will only ever feed ambiently -- that is to say that they do not at any time take energy from a person directly, but instead draw upon the diffuse, free-floating energy given off by people in general, which will either be absorbed by another or disperse on its own.

The problem with Sustainable Vampirism is that the vampire protects the safety and well-being of others at a cost to zirself. Ambient energy provides at best only subsistence maintenance. When a vampire limits zirself to this type of feeding, it has a severe impact on his quality-of-life. The real question when measuring the ethics of Sustainable Vampirism is how far should an individual go to inconvenience zirself for the sake of others?

This form of vampirism can also lead to problems in cases where the vampire's self control slips. In extreme states of need vampirism can regress to an unconscious process, causing unintentional direct feeding.

Vampiric Abstinence

The last point along our ethics continuum goes to even greater extremes, at least as far as self-sacrifice goes. Very few psychic vampires can follow this route. Most of the time it is solution suggested to us or imposed upon us by others who really do not understand what psychic vampirism is.

The basic premise of Vampiric Abstinence is that it is wrong to feed upon sentients -- willing, aware, or otherwise. Vampires are seen as beings who are negative and destructive by nature, and feeding under any circumstances is seen as an act of harm. Many people who hold a belief in

the functionality of Vampiric Abstinence are not vampires themselves. They also usually carry an attitude of "love the sinner, but hate the sin." While it is seen as regrettable that a psychic vampire has this need for energy, the psychic vampire is expected to sacrifice his own well-being for the Greater good.

Aside from the obvious questions of quality-of-life, Vampiric Abstinence runs headlong into a very serious problem: a starving vampire is nobody's friend. No matter how noble, well-intentioned, or self-sacrificing a psychic vampire may be, if that person is truly a psychic vampire then zie must take in vital energy in order to maintain physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. To abstain from this is to invite a host of problems, and in the end, though the vampire will probably survive, it will be in the loosest sense of that term, existing just barely is of pale, suffering shadow of who they could be. The need for energy does not go away in any case. When repressed or denied it comes out unconsciously, directed by instinct.

Once a vampire passes into deep need, zie can no longer really control his intake of energy. With supreme effort, zie can dampen the energetic intake that naturally occurs around them. However, zie will still instinctively take energy from any person zie comes into physical contact with. Vampires who have passed a certain point of starvation are also prone to unconsciously dreamwalking, sending themselves out to friends and loved ones and feeding upon them the dreamspace. All of these activities at this point are Unconscious and instinctive, and therefore almost impossible to control. As noble as sentiment as it may be for a vampire to abstain, starving a true psychic vampire is not in anyone's best interest.

Pure selfishness is undesirable because it is destructive to others. However, pure selflessness is equally undesirable because it is destructive to the self. In case of psychic vampires, pure selflessness carries the additional repercussions of ultimately causing harm to others that cannot be controlled. Having considered the extremes of the continuum, it is clear that the best choice remains the middle ground. Ethical psychic vampirism seeks to consider the needs of both the psychic vampire and those around zir, examining the gray areas between meeting a need in the harm that that need can create.

Why is Feeding Without Consent Wrong?

Feeding is, when done correctly, non-harmful and possibly beneficial to both partners. This is the case whether the donor is aware of it or not. In many cases the process of being fed from can actually act to clear up blockages and invigorate the overall system, and in many cases it can act to relax the donor and help to relieve stress and tension. One-time or short-term feeding rarely has any serious negative effects provided that there are no previous medical conditions and deep feeding is not attempted. Generally, when feeding on people who are not energetic practitioners, they do not even notice.

So why then are there such staunch prohibitions against feeding without consent? It seems that the act of feeding is generally speaking something not even noticed by the average person. What is all the fuss about?

Feeding is, from both sides of the equation, intimate. You're touching a part of a person that is, by many understandings, closer to whom they are than their physical flesh. The fact that they are not aware of that side of themselves, nor of the touching, quite possibly makes it ethically worse to impinge upon it uninvited, in the same way that touching someone intimately when they are unconscious is in many ways worse than the same touch when they are conscious.

A frequent comparison you will find online is to compare unwilling feeding to rape. While this is an extremely inflammatory and overblown comparison, it is accurate in that the harm caused is largely not in the physical effects, but in the invasion of the self. It is also somewhat analogous in that informed consent is the only acceptable form of consent, and that 'they did not say no' is in no way an excuse, and also in that the person being unaware of the event does not make it in any way ethically legitimate.

Many people attempt to avoid this ethical consideration through a sort of mental game with themselves – believing that what they are doing is 'real' in so much as it has an effect on them and is necessary, yet simultaneously brushing off what they are doing on the other hand and failing to acknowledge that it has actual consequences and needs to be addressed seriously. This sort of mental game-playing is used to justify all sorts of magical mischief, including feeding without consent. This is disrespectful both to the victim, and to the set of beliefs in itself. If you cannot confront your own actions, then you should not be performing them.

The side effects of feeding when performed frequently can be even more intrusive. Actual links being formed between two people can cause even a typically non-sensitive person to feel extremely intruded upon. This is where unconscious feeding tends to turn from something that is ethically problematic to something which can cause actual longer-term issues noticeable enough to drive people to seek outside help. (Be aware that when someone actually competent begins helping your victim, things can become considerably less fun.)

Five Tips for Feeding Without Harm

Ethical issues are problematic enough for most psychic vampires, but what happens if you are a Wiccan and a vampire – or a Buddhist? How do you balance your religious ideals of harming no one against your own health and well-being? The followers of a number of religious, spiritual, and personal paths are encouraged to place the well-being of others over the well-being of the Self. Is it possible to adhere to such ethics and still answer one's needs as a psychic vampire?

Psychic vampirism is not a spiritual path unto itself. It is a state of being and can be best approached as a metaphysical condition. While psychic vampirism does not generally care what you believe about your relationship with the world around you, how you choose to express your psychic vampirism often relies very heavily upon your personal spiritual, ideological, and ethical standards.

There is an element among Left Hand Path vampires who eagerly embrace their psychic vampirism, feeling little to no compunction in fulfilling their needs at the expense of others. You especially see this sort of mindset embraced in the writings of the Temple of the Vampire, though it can be seen among others as well. Yet those who follow a path which places the well-being of others above the well-being of the Self often run into serious difficulties with their inherently vampiric condition.

In traditions like Wicca where the highest precept is "An It Harm None", a psychic vampire can have a hard time justifying zir vampirism. Hindus and Buddhists, who revere ahimsa (literally "no harm"), run into this same difficulty, as do many humanists who, though not distinctly spiritual, feel it is not their place to take away something that rightfully belongs to another..

This begs the question, however, of how one takes the vital life force of another living being without ultimately causing harm? Below are five suggestions for feeding in a way that offers a positive exchange or does not infringe directly on the well-being of another:

1. Feed ambiently. Ambient energy is that energy which is being constantly

given off by all living beings. Humans especially produce large amounts of ambient energy in emotionally-charged situations like concerts, lively worship services, and jam-packed conventions or fairs. Ambient energy is a by-product of the living, and once it is given off by them, it is no longer attached to any single specific person. Such energy is cast adrift in the environment to be caught up in currents and recycled by the cosmos, fed upon by various otherworldly entities, or re-absorbed by psychic vampires and non-vampires alike. If you have serious personal objections to taking the energy from another living being because you feel that they need this energy as much or more than you do, then ambient energy is your safest choice. And if you do not soak up some of the ambient energy in a highly charged environment, it is very likely that someone or something else will.

2. Give a tense person a backrub. We have all been in that situation where there is all this stress and tension thrumming throughout every muscle and nerve. It is not a good idea to carry around this kind of stressed-out energy. It builds up as blockages that manifest in muscle spasms, cramps, and worse. Relaxing baths and grounding techniques release stress by helping remove that pent-up energy from the body, washing it away or sending it into the earth. A psychic vampire can remove this energy as well, filtering out the unhealthy emotional component and assimilating the vital energy that remains. Establishing physical contact with the hands is a very efficient method of taking energy, and with a backrub, you are exchanging a soothing, pleasurable experience for a little of what you need. To insure that you do no harm to your partner, you have to cultivate a good deal of self-control so that you never take any energy other than that which is causing the blockages, muscle tension and stress. And filtering is essential so you do not simply adopt all that stress and blocked energy into yourself.

3. Help someone who is anxious or high-strung to relax. Some people have entirely too much nervous energy for their own good. Perhaps some situation in their lives has their mind racing. Perhaps they chronically are hyperkinetic and cannot sit still. Sometimes these conditions present as ADD or ADHD. Whatever the problem, such people are generating more energy than they can comfortably handle and after a while, it has no place to go. Grounding typically helps such people cope with their over-energetic state, and when they do this, they are literally dumping their excess energy out into the world. If you know such a person and they are amenable to the idea, make their problem your solution and withdraw the excess energy into you. You can make this a particularly soothing experience for them by lightly tracing lines with your fingers on the inside of their wrist and palm while allowing the overflow of energy to seep into you. Or you can lay their head in your lap and gently stroke their temples and brow, again using the physical contact as a focus for transferring the energy from them to you. Your partner will find themselves more relaxed (and probably able to sleep better!) and you will have some of the vital energy you need.

4. Help someone vent negative emotions. A lot of psychic vampires who are unaware of their condition instinctively learn that being a shoulder to cry on makes them feel good. Some unAwakened psychic vampires even learn to create highly emotional situations around them expressly to soak up all the emotions directed their way, negative or otherwise. As we saw with ambient energy, highly emotional states cause people to give off a good deal more energy than usual. Especially when the emotion is hurtful and negative, a lot

of this also gets built up within a person and needs to be purged. Venting these negative emotions helps get their built-up energy out, and a skilled psychic vampire can assist with this process. Helping a friend release pent-up emotion lets them purge the negativity from their system and allows you to take the energy that comes with it for yourself. The key here is to exercise this capacity only consciously so you do not fall into the trap of creating melodrama around you simply to feed upon the wealth of emotion. Furthermore, while some psychic vampires are more than able to assimilate emotionally-laden energy without much ill-effect, you will probably want to learn how to filter the negativity out so you do not run the risk of experiencing the bad emotions yourself.

5. Engage in Tantric energy play. In all of the person-to-person techniques mentioned above, it is best to act with your partner's full knowledge and consent. However, when it comes to Tantric play, the consent of your partner is essential. There is a reason that Tantric work is used for sex magick. Sexual play always generates a good deal of energy, and this energy is just waiting to be harnessed. Tantric work does not always have to equate strictly to intercourse but can involve any activity directed toward the pleasurable stimulation of your partner. Adding energy work to the physical aspect of intimate play intensifies the experience and heightens all aspects of pleasure. Since you are engaged in close contact with your partner, it is easy to take the resulting energy into yourself, and in fact it will be hard not to. A certain level of energy is exchanged between partners in every type of sexual encounter, and for a psychic vampire who is skilled in both energy work and the sensual arts, there will be more than enough compensation to make the experience worthwhile for your partner.

Helpful Tips for Ethical Vampires

- Always try to feed from someone you care about -- that way your concern for them will give you an added incentive to retain control. Do not feed from someone you're angry with (even if they're willing) -- it will be too easy to slip and bring them harm.
- It is ill-advised to engage in direct contact feeding if you are so low that you're in danger of losing control. Take the edge off with ambient feeding and long distance techniques. Once you feel more a master of your hunger, then you can safely take directly from a willing partner.
- Understand that you might never feed to satiation and instead come to understand how much energy is "just enough" to get you by.
- Feed for your health and spiritual vitality. Never feed just for power.
- Finally, know your limits and the limits of your partner. Pay attention to heartrate, breathing and body temperature. If something seems wrong -- especially if your partner seems to be losing consciousness -- stop and check on things. It is always better to be safe than to find yourself in an emergency situation.
- No matter how difficult things get, or what others say, remember that you are NOT a monster. You are a human being with a metaphysical condition that you need to treat. We advocate taking as ethical an approach as possible, we know that sometimes in all the warnings and "do nots" a person can feel overburdened by guilt or shame. There is no reason to be ashamed as long as you are doing your level best to act in as ethical a manner possible. Being vampiric does not make you evil.

The Black Veil

"The Black Veil" is a set of ethical guidelines originally written for the Sanguinarium and the OSV, then edited several times. The edition printed below is the 2002 update. Since its original publication "The Black Veil" has been adopted by many different groups and individuals as an ethical code. While there are certainly many other vampiric ethical codes in existence, we find this to be a very good example of a way to approach vampirism ethically. Following of this code, or something similar, is one of the very few things we require of Kherete Houses.

Discretion

Respect yourself and present yourself so that others also respect you. Take care in revealing your nature. Explain what you are, not to shock, but to teach and to inform. Do not flaunt what you are, and know that whether you want them to or not, your actions will reflect upon the rest of the community.

Share your nature only with those with the wisdom to understand and accept it, and learn to recognize these people.

Diversity

Among us, there are many different practices and many points of view. No single one of us has all the answers to who and what we are. Respect each person's individual choices and beliefs. Learn about them and share what you know. Our diversity is our strength, and we should not allow misunderstanding to weaken our community.

Find the path that is right for you and uphold this freedom for others.

Control

Do not allow your darkness to consume you. You are more than just your hunger, and you can exercise conscious control. Do not be reckless. Always act with a mind toward safety. Never feed because you think this makes you powerful; feed because this is what you must do.

Be true to your nature, but never use it as an excuse to endanger those around you.

Elders

Give respect to those who have earned it. Anyone can claim a title, but a true leader will prove zirself through dedication, hard work, and great deeds. Even so, leaders should be guides and not dictators. Look to them as examples, but always decide for yourself what you must do.

Respect the person, not the position, and understand that your choices are always your own.

Behavior

Know that there are repercussions to every action, and that you alone are responsible for your decisions. Educate yourself about risky behaviors, then always act with wisdom and common sense. Do not allow others to abuse you, but also, do not selfishly abuse.

Respect the rights of others and treat them as you would be treated.

Donors

Feeding should occur between consenting adults. Allow donors to make an informed decision before they give of themselves to you. Do not take rapaciously from others, but seek to have an exchange that is pleasant and beneficial for all.

Respect the life that you feed upon and do not abuse those who provide for you.

Community

Reach out to others in your community. Exchange ideas, information, and support. Be hospitable to others, and appreciate hospitality when it is extended to you. Do not engage in illegal activity, for this can endanger us all.

Seek to nurture our community and support all those who do the same.

Ritual

The tendency towards ritual is found in every human being, regardless of religious path or discipline. Something as simple as the order in which one dresses in the morning can be called a ritual. Rituals can serve to make an instance memorable or important, set aside from the daily mundane. Rituals in a religious sense are most commonly created and celebrated for the purpose of formally marking transitions or rites of passage. Sometimes the transitions are on a personal level, like a coming of age or marriage. Other times the rite celebrates the turn of the season or changing of the natural energies.

Kheprian Ritual

Kheprian ritual breaks ritual down to its basic energetic mechanics and adds just enough stage directions to make performing those actions practical. It then divides the work up for performing and maintaining those steps between the participants. Each participant in ritual acts to fill one of the three divisions, which align with the three caste roles. For full ritual, each division of participants then has a specific special role which one member of that group acts to fulfill.

The breakdown of roles aligns with how the House breaks down the castes:

Warriors – Define and protect the space, keep the energy connected to the physical world (which the House calls grounding – and is not to be confused with the Pagan idea of grounding which is a method of getting rid of energy).

> One special role of the Warriors is called the **Guardian** and is in charge of guarding admittance the space generally by standing at the doorway. The Guardian is an important part of ritual, but also is somewhat removed from it, as their focus is completely on protecting the participants rather then assuring that the ritual works.

Counselors – Create the energy the ritual uses and keep it flowing, keep the participants connected, be able to move in and out of the space if necessary

> One special role of the Counselors is called the **Herald** and is in charge of assuring that the ritual runs smoothly by playing the role of ritual assistant. They also are the one participant who should be able to move in and out of the ritual space without causing a disturbance. This is generally done to fetch people for degree rites.

Priests – Give structure to the energy laid out by the Counselors, direct the energy and the ritual.

> One special role of the Priests is the **Ritualist** and is basically the main speaker of the ritual and the one in charge of focusing the energies of the ritual.

How many of each group is required is highly dependent on the individual levels of skill involved. Generally speaking, the goal is to get the system balanced so that each individual is working optimally. In a very general sense that means about 1 Priest for every 2 Warriors and 3 Counselors, though flexibility is occasionally called for (for example, if the Counselors are not skilled and the Warriors are, more Counselors or less Warriors may be needed). The number of Priests needs to increase much more slowly as the number of participants in general goes up. Generally, 3-5 skilled Priests should be able to handle even a very large ritual, while not having enough Counselors to create the energy can be much more problematic.

Ritual Structure

What defines a Kheprian ritual, above all else, is the structure in which it is preformed – the opening and closing processes especially. The actual content of the ritual can vary greatly from ritual to ritual, but the process creates an identifiable sense of cohesion throughout the ritual.

There are a couple of variations of the ritual structure which essentially denote different levels of seriousness and care taken in construction. Essentially they include shortening different sections and cutting things down even further. Because the Kheprian ritual structure is pretty sparse to begin with, cutting additional things out of it will tend to influence its effectiveness. However, sometimes there is just a desire to cut things down, and so the changes are made.

Kheprian Ritual Structure requires two spaces – a space which is considered the 'ritual' space, and a space just outside that ritual space. The space outside the ritual space doesn't have to be anything special or sacred, it is just a practical space for people to be before and after the ritual takes place, since Kheprian ritual involves entering and leaving the space in a specific order.

All of the participants gather in the space outside the ritual space and are respectfully quiet as to not disturb the ritual. People prepare themselves mentally for ritual however they feel appropriate.

The Warriors enter into the ritual space first. Generally speaking, they walk in as a single-file line. The leader walks from the entrance to slightly to the right of the center of the space and circles around counter-clockwise until zie is back near the door. The other Warriors follow and in this fashion form a circle around the center of the space.

The Warriors have three energetic duties they perform at this time. Firstly, they define the boundaries of the space with wards. Secondly, they ground out any excess energy which has gathered in the space. Thirdly, they chase away anything unfriendly (physical or not which is in the space). The Guardian takes up a position by the door to physically guard the space. The other Warriors form the outline of a circle within the space, placing themselves about equi-distant from one another, and roughly forming a circle which will eventually be large enough for all of the participants to stand in. (So even if there are only 3 Warriors standing in the circle, if there will be 15 people entering the space, the circle the Warriors now form must be large enough for all 15.) When the Warriors feel the space is secure, they indicate this to the Counselors (often by nodding to the lead Counselor, who is watching this process).

The Counselors come into the space and form a circle in the same manner as the Warriors did. The Counselors then join hands, and begin to cycle energy. Counselors have two basic duties in this phase of the ritual. Their first duty is to fill the space with energy. Their second duty is to reach out and connect each of the ritual participants – including both themselves and the Warriors.

The Herald will try to ensure that when the circling is finished they will be stepping back to a space right next to where the Ritualist will be standing. When the Counselors feel that sufficient energy has been generated and that everyone is well connected they step back to join the circle with the Warriors, again trying to disperse themselves fairly evenly around the circle. The leading Counselor will then nod to the Priests, one of whom is generally watching over the proceedings for this signal.

The Priests then enter in the same way as the Warriors and the Counselors, forming a circle in the center of the space. As each Priest enters, the Counselors establish a connection in order to continue providing the Priests with energy as needed. The Priest has only one duty in this phase of process – to build a metaphoric temple out of the energy which has been distributed by the Counselors, in the space

created and guarded by the Warriors. Each of the Priests acts as a pillar in this Temple, which becomes the sacred space in which Kheprians do ritual. When the Priests feel the temple has been built, the Priests step back, attempting to space themselves evenly.

The Ritualist generally attempts to position zirself so that zie will be stepping back to the place designated as the head of the ritual space.

Sometimes the group will now join hands and cycle energy amongst themselves to create a stronger connection. This step is frequently skipped, especially when dealing with a very familiar group.

In House Kheperu, the Ritualist then begins leading the Family Charge, which is a poem of significance to the House comprised of essentially a statement of who we are. House Members either speak along with the Ritualist or remain silent as the mood suits them. For your own rituals, you may decide to read the Creed of the Kherete, or some other piece that is meaningful to your group.

The body of the ritual now begins. Generally speaking, this whole portion falls mostly to the Ritualist to direct with the other Priests acting to support the Ritualist and direct energy along the same lines. The Warriors continue to keep watch over the space both physically and spiritually and to lower the frequency of energy to keep everyone from getting a head-rush. The Counselors continue to generate energy, make sure that it is flowing, and keep everyone connected during the ritual.

At the conclusion of the body of the ritual, we end with the Family Prayer – once again this is a statement of who we are, and what our goals are moving forward. You may use something of meaning to your group, or the included Kherete Closing Prayer:

We come together to acknowledge our connections.

In the space of this circle, we forge ties that bind us deeper than flesh.

Our paths are many, but here in this moment, we feel and we function as one.

In this space between spaces, we share one voice, one energy, and one will.

And with our shared vision, we reach out to the world, unleashing the power to bring about change.

Together as many.

Together as one.

Kherete kheretass

Following there is often a cue to the effect of "[Name of Priest Nearest the Door] please lead us out"

The Priests now walk out. They begin by moving slightly towards the center of the circle, then the Priest nearest the door without having to ever walk clockwise heads for the exit, followed by the other Priests in a counter-clockwise direction. While they are heading out, they drop concentration on the Temple and let it generally fall apart. The Counselors also let go of their connections to them as they leave the space.

After the Priests have walked out, the Counselors walk out – again beginning with the Counselor closest to the door without having to walk clockwise, and circling around until all are gone. As the Counselors walk out, each drops any connections they were holding up.

The Warriors are the last to go, and may or may not linger or even return to the space after lead-out is complete. Their duty is to tear down the energetic space and to ground it, leaving it essentially clean and without too much residual energy from the ritual.

Technically, the ritual is now over. In practice, House Members now meet outside in the space outside the ritual and have a very informal time of calming down,

self-grounding, and talking about how things went. Formal debriefs or "this is how this worked" sessions do not often happen when amongst Family, but these informal sessions – which often include suggestions for improvement or general comments – serve the same basic purpose.

Modifications to the Structure

For a more casual ritual, instead of separate timed lead-ins all the Members can enter the space at the same time, each stepping into the center from the outer circle when it is their group's part, and then stepping back out again. Lead-out can also be done with everyone leaving at once and just letting things collapse in a less structured way – but generally the Warriors must go back in and clean up the space afterwards.

For larger group rituals (>30 people or so) the castes can be made into concentric circles with the Warriors on the outside, followed by a ring of Counselors, followed by the Priests in the center. This has the unfortunate side effect that it will often leave the Warriors feeling very disconnected from the ritual, but is sometimes the only way to practically manage very large groups and is just as ritually effective.

For smaller or less formal rituals, the secondary positions of Herald and Guardian can be omitted. Herald is the least necessary, followed by Guardian. Omitting the Ritualist is generally very difficult to do in most rituals, as you need someone to talk. The Prayer or Charge can be omitted – but almost never both, even for public rituals.

Sometimes Rituals just end before walk-out for one reason or another, depending on the energy of the ritual. As long as the space gets cleared and the people end up grounded and feeling alright, the ending is just a good way to start to come down from the experience. Again, usually these sorts of non-endings require cleanup from the Warriors afterwards.

Differing Approaches

In House Kheperu, there are a number of things one may find in other rituals (especially of the Pagan variety) that are not done. If an individual practitioner or group feels strongly about something that has been removed, you are more than welcome to re-integrate as suits the mood of your participants. House Kheperu does no formal energetic cleansing or smudging that takes place as part of the ritual. Participants are expected to do that themselves, before the ritual begins. The belief in the House is if the participant cannot handle that, they probably should not be part of ritual.

House Kheperu also does not tend to summon things into ritual, with the exception of the Disembodied for their seasonal rite and calling out to absent members during that seasonal rite. Since the Warriors are expected to personally protect and guard the space, watchtowers or the divine are not called in. This is also in large part due to the diversity of spiritual paths represented in the House.

For the most part, Kheprian rites are solemn and the opening and closing portions are near-silent. The Counselors do not use any assistance such as dance, drumming, chanting, etc. to raise energy – they are just supposed to do it. Some of you may discover different for yourselves, especially if you are working with novices or people new to the Kheprian style of ritual. Being rather different from other systems of ritual, it is sometimes hard for someone to "generate energy" from a standing position, so try some things if you are having trouble. Some Kheprian rituals for the public have included such things as the hokey-pokey to get things focused and moving for the Counselors.

The usual "trimmings" like soft background music, incense, candles, and tools are not generally included as a regular part practice. If it works for you, do it.

"I don't have enough of X Caste"

It just so happens that even in the most ideal of groups, due to scheduling, you can sometimes find yourself either completely lacking, or just having one of, a particular Caste. Because it is actually fairly important that each group be represented, this can be a tricky situation.

This is where we can be thankful that the Caste system is not an absolute. Most experienced practitioners can eventually learn to pick up a secondary role. They may not be as good at it as their primary role, but they should be able to function. If you have to skew the numbers, it is good to drop the Priests first – unfortunately, most Priests cannot do secondary roles well, and if they can, they can do maybe Warrior. Some Warriors can generate energy like a Counselor, some Priests can do the connection part of the Counselor role. Few of either group can actually perform both Counselor roles well – though there are some people who seem to naturally sit between Counselor and Warrior who can do an adequate job of both roles. Many times both Counselors and Warriors can learn to step into the Priest role if necessary. Some Counselors and some Priests can perform the Warrior role decently well. Some people can learn all three roles – but there is almost always one they are best at, one they are reasonable at, and one they struggle with. Some people fit very well into the Caste system – they tend to be amazing at one role, but struggle to even attempt performing any other. In particular, those without the Kheprian alteration tend to have much more flexibility when it comes to changing Caste, since their subtle bodies have not been wired or modified to solely provide this one function.

This is one of the reasons it is a good thing for more experienced members to occasionally experiment with attempting to perform the other Caste's roles in ritual. This generally should be after spending at least a few rituals filling their 'primary' role to a decent level of proficiency – but the flexibility of having people who can do multiple-duty is excellent. The problem with not making a point of learning this separately is that if you wait until an emergency to try it, the person gets to try out the caste-role as one of the only members of that caste – which is usually an inherently tricky situation for even someone fairly experienced. So try it out during a more standard ritual (such as a seasonal rite) when it is less likely to be disruptive.

What generally should be avoided, except in extreme cases, is to have someone switching mid-ritual. Yes, you can do this if absolutely necessary, but unless the person is extremely good at what zie is doing it can be disruptive. If you feel you must do this, try having the person switch right before/after the opening and closing sections, since this is usually where the most need is.

Kherete Wheel of the Year

The Eight Seasonal Holidays are arranged across the lightside and darkside of the year. The dates of these rites correspond roughly to the dates of the eight seasonal Sabbats celebrated by witches, although we are more interested in honoring the seasonal peak in power rather than adhering to an exact day. The holidays across the Wheel of the Year are reflections of one another, those one the darkside honoring our connection to spirit and to our Higher Selves, and those on the lightside honoring life and this current incarnation. The essence of each rites is best understood when paired with its reflective ritual on the other side of the year.

The Night of Transformation (All Saints – November 1)

We gather to honor our Awakening and the ancient Self this ties us to.

The Night of Immortal Stars (Winter Solstice – December 21)

We gather to honor the mystical connections that define us as Family.

The Night of Shades (Imbolc – February 1)

We gather to honor our disembodied and spirit guides and we remember those that have crossed over into flesh.

The Time of Dawn (Spring Equinox – March 21)

We gather to acknowledge the passing from the darkside of the year to the lightside, and we witness the changing of the High Priest.

The Day of the Lower Self (Beltane – May 1)

We gather to honor this current incarnation and how our present life enriches us

The Day of Oaths (Summer Solstice – June 21)

We gather to honor the oaths made in this life that bind us as a group

The Day of Death (Lughnasadh - August 1)

We gather to honor individuals from this current life whose deaths have helped to shape us.

The Time of Dusk (Fall Equinox – September 21)

We gather to acknowledge the passing from the lightside of the year to the darkside, and we witness the changing of the High Priest.

Reflections of the Holidays

The ritual cycle is based on the division of the year into a dark side and a light side. The rituals of each represent mirrors to their counterparts six months apart. The mirrored rituals are as follows:

The Night of Transformation is the darkside reflection of the Day of the Lower Self.

The Night of Immortal Stars is the darkside reflection of the Day of Oaths.

The Night of Shades is the darkside reflection of the Day of Death.

The Time of Dawn is the threshold that stands opposite the Time of Dusk.

Future of Kherete

Kherete Foundations Series

The document you have in your hands is the first book in the Kherete Foundations Series. This series will consist of multiple books that lay out the main teachings and explanations in regards to the Kherete. As stated in the introduction, this expands upon the Psychic Vampire Codex and foundational energetic principles. This is not to say that these materials will be covering the typical energy-101, rather they will consist of things that continue on from the material presented in the PVC.

The first book – The Path of the Kherete – covers what exactly the Kherete path is, as well as covering extensions of some concepts covered in brief in the Codex. It largely acts to fill in the answers to some of the most frequently received questions that have been received.

Future books in the series have been tentatively planned to cover more advanced topics in magic & ritual, forming/working with a group, the subtle body, and constructs & alterations. Additionally, other books have planned on a slightly more Kheprian-specific bent, giving more information about the current House and how things run, as well as some of the history and Caste-related matters. We cannot release a specific order as yet, as the administration is still working such things out and gathering material.

Distribution and Support

The books will be offered through two methods. Firstly, they will be offered via downloadable PDFs on the Kherete site. Secondly they will be available for a small fee via Lulu or other print-on-demand sites in an actual paper book format. This is simply because people like paper books and this is a good way to provide them.

Most of the material the House provides is really best for working in a group. Working with other people carries huge advantages – and even working in a group of people without any one already-educated person provides opportunities for people to share their mutual interests, keep each other engaged, and provide (hopefully) a reality check as material is perused. However, the reality of the situation is that not everyone is going to be able to find a group, so where possible, we will offer ways to alter the techniques for solitaries, as well as offer support via online forums and techniques for distance-workings.

The Kherete Project and the Open Source Model

The hope is that eventually the Kherete Project will grow to such an extent that the members of House Kheperu are no longer the only people supporting it, and that other people will add their contributions to our body of work. The metaphor/model that has been thrown around for this is that of an open source project.

In Open Source projects there are a few people – typically head developers – that have control over the primary bit of code and approve/disapprove changes to the main bulk of material. From there you have various people who contribute bits of material for inclusion – which are usually added provided there's nothing really wrong with them. 'Users' of the material are likewise supported by volunteers and by people who have contributed to the project.

This is a model that has been hugely successful for certain projects, and as such we hope that it will be applicable here. The Kherete Project is a very large-scale project,

and our hope is that if people care enough to use it, people will also find time to contribute to it via editing, commenting, and contributing. The administrators are always happy to hear from people who may wish to get involved and help contribute to future publications.

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Appendix A: Trance Induction

There is a variety of induction techniques for going into stages of trance or altered states. The most simple is to focus on the breath. Changing from your typical breathing pattern to one deeper and more prolonged can shift you into trance. Take a long, slow, deep breath. Breathe in slowly…hold it…breathe out slowly. Breathe in…hold it…breathe out. Breathe in…hold it…breathe out. Then continue breathing deeply and evenly. If you tend to rush the breathing, you may choose to count a certain number of beats (3-4 is the average). If you do count, count the same amount for the inhalation, hold, exhalation, and hold again.

If deep breathing does not work, you can focus on something repetitive, like counting. Some count breaths, others count on a rosary or mala, some count in their head. Counting down tends to be somewhat more relaxing to some, but is not the only way to accomplish your goal. Experiment with a few different methods.

The other popular method is a systematic tense-and-release of the different parts of the body. The tensing up before focuses all of your attention on the body, allowing for a more complete release and relaxation. Caution: If you have physical disabilities, injuries, or health conditions, you may find this difficult, or need to make alterations to bypass injured limbs. An MP3 of a Full-Body Relaxation induction, read by Michelle Belanger, can be found in the Resources section of Kherete.org

There are also certain instruments that lend themselves well to trance induction. Repetitive drumming is the most common, but there is also an Indian instrument known as a tamboura whose droning tones tend to lull the listener into varying states of trance. (Tamboura tracks can be found at Amazon and many other sites).

Methods can also be combined, depending on what works best for you. An MP3 of a combination deep breathing and relaxation induction (titled “The Sound of My Voice”) read by Michelle Belanger can be found in the Resources section of *Kherete.org*.

Appendix B: Recommended Reading List

Psychic Development & Energy Work

Astral Dynamics, Robert Bruce (ISBN 978-1571741431)

Energy Work, Robert Bruce (ISBN 978-1571745408)

Extraordinary Psychic, Debra Lynne Katz (ISBN 978-0738713335)

Heaven & Earth: Making the Psychic Connection, James Van Pragh (ISBN 978-0743223586)

Psychic Development for Beginners, William H Hewitt (ISBN 978-1567183603)

The Psychic Energy Codex, Michelle Belanger (ISBN 978-1578633852)

Real Energy: Systems, Spirits, And Substances to Heal, Change, And Grow, Phaedra & Issac Bonewits (ISBN 978-1564149046)

Vampires & Vampirism

The Ethical Psychic Vampire, Raven Kaldera (ISBN 978-0578007908)

The Psychic Vampire Codex, Michelle Belanger (ISBN 978-1578633210)

Vampires in Their Own Words, ed. Michelle Belanger (ISBN 978-0738712208)

Otherkin

A Field Guide to Otherkin, Lupa (ISBN 978-1905713073)